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Rome

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# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

Historical **2<sup>nd</sup> Edition** Reference

## The Glory of Rome

Campaign Sourcebook





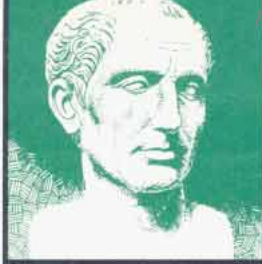
# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup>

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## The Glory of Rome

### Campaign Sourcebook





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## Introduction

Rome began as a small town on the Tiber river and grew into a powerful force for civilization, law, and order in the ancient world. The Roman Republic, and its successor the Empire, was a federation of teeming cities linked by arrow-straight roads. Its peace and prosperity—the legendary Pax Romanum—were safeguarded by the invincible legions that held back the barbarian hordes.

But Rome also had a darker side: the cruelty of mass slavery and the bloody arena, the greed and opulence of the upper class, the unruly mobs pacified by bread and circuses, and the tyranny of mad emperors, such as Caligula and Nero. The Empire fell into darkness, but its ghost haunted the Middle Ages and inspired the Renaissance.

This is the Roman experience, a real epic of good and evil whose memory has inspired thousands of books, movies, and comics, and which provides an unmatched setting for role-playing adventure.

## Using This Book

*Glory of Rome* is a stepping stone into a world of historical fantasy adventure. Characters may assume the roles of steadfast legionaries, ambitious Roman statesmen, doomed gladiators, bold charioteers, rebel slaves, or even missionary Christian priests.

DMs should make two decisions before starting a Roman campaign. First, decide whether magic and monsters exist. This book assumes they do. Its focus is on Rome as the Romans believed it to be, and their world-view was one in which magic and monsters were shadowy but very real. However, these magical elements are easily deleted by DMs who want a strictly historical campaign.

Second, choose the time period in which the campaign takes place—whether this is the Rome of the old Republic or the Empire. DMs should not be afraid to change history in the interests of a good story (or to let the PCs change it by their actions), but including historical events and personages in a scenario adds atmosphere and can be used to furnish many opportunities for exciting adventure. The chapter entitled “A Short History of Rome” provides a brief overview of Rome’s history and can be useful in selecting a period. After zeroing in on the period, it can be worthwhile to read a good historical novel or consult a reference book set in that era to furnish additional details.

Next, consult with the players and decide what kind of campaign to run. A Roman campaign works best if there is an overall theme. Some possibilities

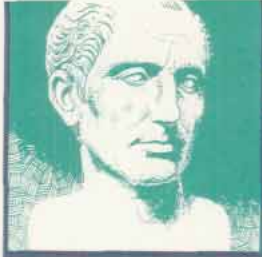
are described below:

**Legionaries:** The PCs are soldiers in the Roman army. On an individual level, they may be members of an elite squad of legionaries serving in a dangerous frontier, such as the border between Gaul and Germania. They venture into the wilds on patrols, act as couriers for important messages, hunt bandits or pirates, hunt down rebels, guerrillas, and terrorists, suppress cults that perform human sacrifice (such as the druids), go on spy missions deep into barbarian territory, stumble onto political plots to discredit or assassinate their commander, and so on. On a larger scale, characters may play Roman officers or generals, and use the *BATTLESYSTEM*® rules to fight out battles or military campaigns in any of Rome’s wars. The “Armies and Enemies of Rome” chapter provides useful information for a legionary campaign.

**Politicians:** The PCs are high-born Romans serving in law or politics, or the aides, agents, or spies of politicians. The cut-and-thrust of Roman politics involved much more than flowery speeches on the senate floor. Winning an election or staying in power involved dirty tricks, courtroom battles to convict opponents of scandals or corruption, even bloody







street fighting between rival gangs of stormtroopers. PCs may be embroiled in plots and power struggles or be the target of family feuds. And Rome's statesmen were also its generals: an elected magistrate could find himself leading Rome's legions in desperate campaigns on foreign shores.

**Gladiators:** The PCs are gladiators, beast-fighters, or charioteers. Besides the death-or-glory of the games, they may be involved in rivalries with other performers, while gladiators may also serve as swords-for-hire. "The Games" chapter provides rules and background for a campaign set in the arena or circus.

**Travelers:** The PCs travel the world and visit strange new lands. They might be diplomats and their body guards, bounty hunters seeking criminals or runaway slaves, agents of the emperor or another official trying to trap exotic beasts to please the Empire in the arena, merchants seeking new markets, or philosopher-mages hunting for ancient lore.

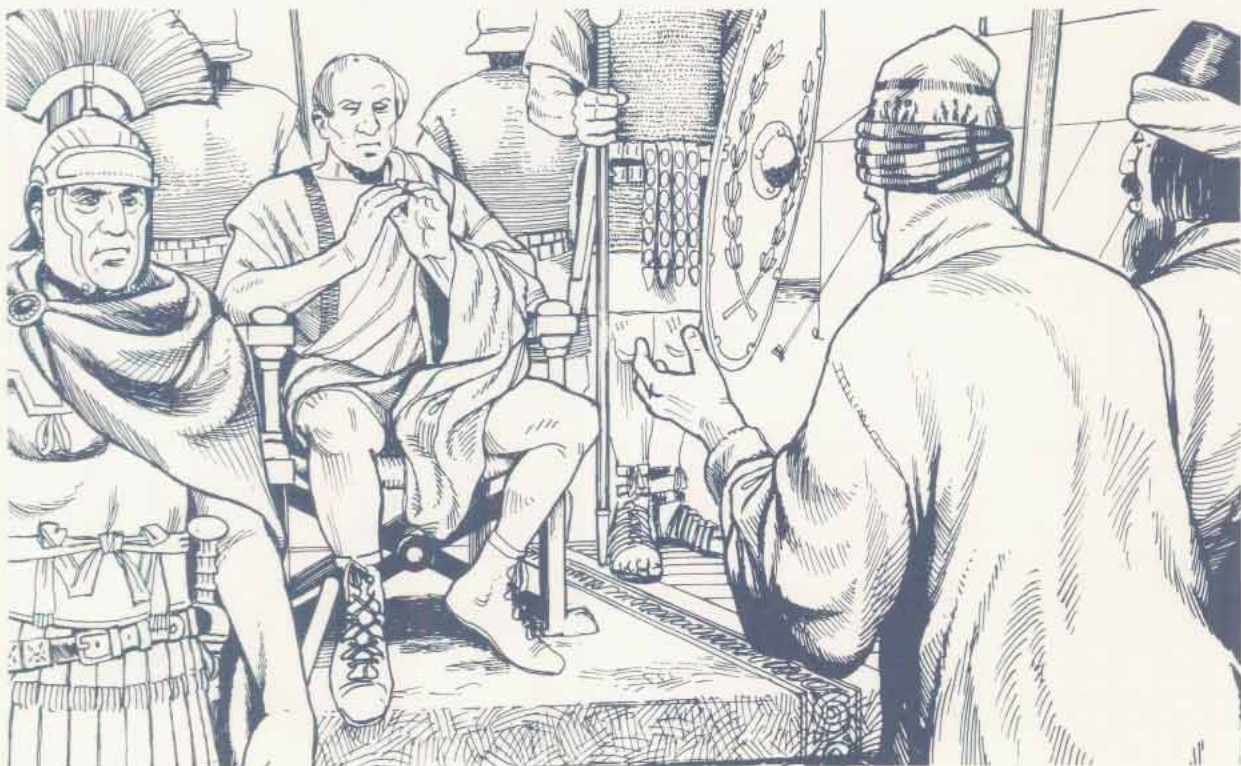
**Streets of Rome:** Rome was not a very safe city—crime, corruption, intrigue, and strange cults were everywhere! PCs could be honest city guards, retired legionaries turned street enforcers, or gladiators seeking some extra money. PCs might protect the

neighborhood against equestrian slumlords and their armies of private gladiators or criminals seeking protection money. Monsters could have escaped the arena, or cults or brothels might be kidnapping women and children. The characters could be asked to help Christians hiding from persecution or track down thieves, arsonists, robbers, or serial killers. They may discover plots forming against public officials—or be recruited by the plotters themselves.

**Rebels and Martyrs:** Instead of being loyal Romans, PCs may take on the role of Rome's oppressed subjects: PCs could be slaves, Christians, Jews, Britons, or Gauls, or any other people desperate to rise up and throw off the Roman yoke by passive resistance, escape, or armed struggle.

## The Roman Campaign Sourcebook and the AD&D® 2nd Edition Rules

This sourcebook is meant to be used with the AD&D 2nd Edition rules. However, the AD&D rules reflect a generic medieval fantasy reality, not a fantasy Rome. When using a Roman setting, any altered rules in this book take precedence over those in other AD&D books.





## A Short History of Rome

*"Other peoples may yet more skillfully teach bronze to breathe, or bring forth the life lying hidden in marble; some may plead causes better, or better use the tools of science to chart the stars' changing courses.*

*But Roman, remember you well that your own arts are these others:*

*To govern the nations in power; to dictate their rule in peace; to raise up the peoples you've conquered; and to tame the proud who resist."*

—Virgil, *The Aeneid*, book VI

## The Founding Myth

When the Romans first began to write about their history, Greece was the fountainhead of civilization. Roman authors who tried to explain how their city had come into being naturally looked back to the rich fields of Greek legend, particularly the national epic of Greece, the *Iliad*, which told the story of the Trojan War.

Patriotic Romans believed they were descended from Aeneas, a Trojan hero and son of the goddess Aphrodite. When the city of Troy fell, Aeneas and his followers escaped and sailed in search of a new home. One account of this myth claims that Aeneas visited Carthage and had an affair with Dido. Dido was the sister of Pygmalion, the tyrant king of Tyre, and had fled there to found Carthage. Aeneas did not linger long in Carthage, though, but left with Dido cursing him and all of his descendants. Aeneas went on to found the city of Lavinium, in Italy.

A separate version of the tale claims that Aeneas went straight to Italy, where he then allied himself with Latinus, king of the Latins, and married his daughter. Regardless of which tale is told, though, Aeneas's son Ascanius founded the city of Alba Longa in the Albin Hills not far south of Rome's present location.

All was well for nearly 300 years, until Aeneas's descendant, King Numitor, was overthrown by his wicked brother Amulius. Numitor's own life was spared, but his sons were murdered and his daughter Rhea Silvia was forced to become a vestal virgin so she would not bear children to challenge Amulius. But then Rhea was visited by the war-god Mars, they became lovers, and she bore him twin boys.

The angry Amulius ordered that Rhea's children be condemned to drowning. They were taken to the Tiber in a basket with the idea that they would be set afloat and would drown when

the basket flooded and sank. The river, however, was flooded, and the men who had been given the task of placing the basket in the water only came to its edge, fearing the deep water and swift current and hoping that it would sufficiently sweep the basket away.

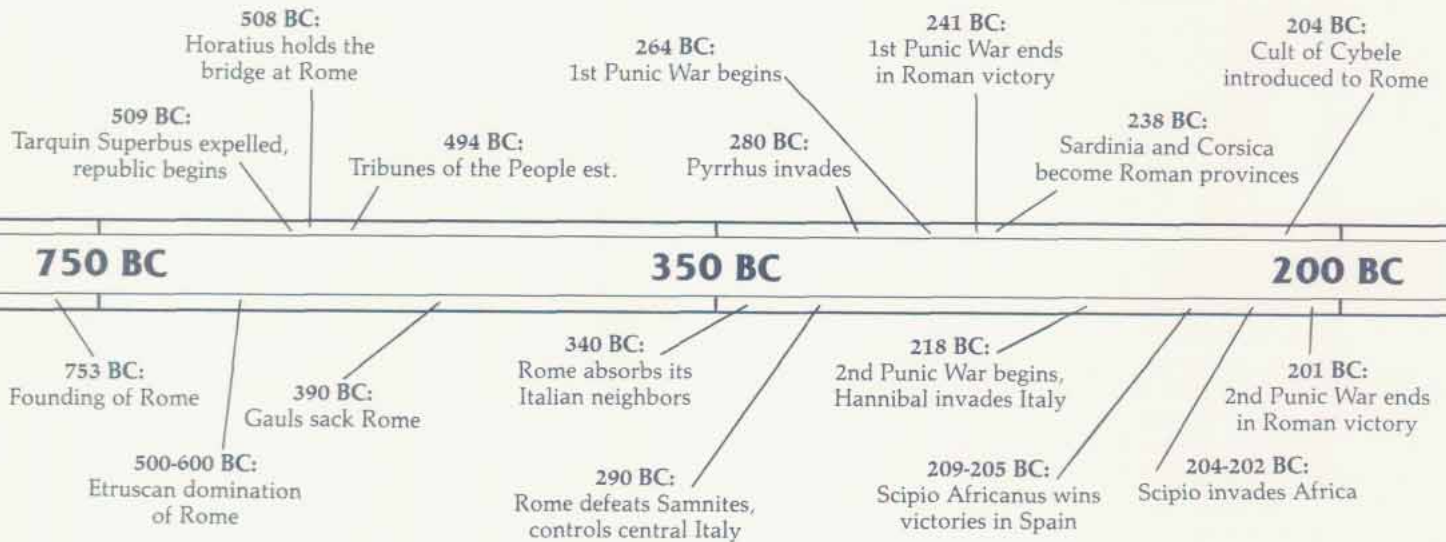
The basket did not sink, but instead was left stranded on a shore several miles downstream when the river level went down. Mars sent a she-wolf and woodpecker to nurse and feed his children. The twins were found by a herdsman and his wife. One of the traditional emblems of Rome is a she-wolf, commonly believed to be adopted because of this story. A separate version of the myth claims that the twins were actually found by a woman of questionable morals who was known commonly as "the wolf." In either case, the twins were named Romulus and Remus.

As they grew up, the twins had many adventures in which they displayed great strength and courage. By the time they were young men, Romulus and Remus were recognized leaders. On one adventure, they met Numitor and learned their true parentage. They killed Amulius, freed Rhea, and restored their grandfather to the throne.

To celebrate their victory, the twins decided to found their own city. They chose a site farther down the Tiber, near where they had been discovered as babies, on the largest of seven hills. Remus and Romulus quarreled over the name of their city. They chose to settle the dispute by each watching for an omen; the first to spot one could name the city. Remus spotted six vultures, while Romulus spotted even more vultures than that, making his omen better. Remus, however, had seen his omen first. The twins argued again, and to mock Romulus during their argument, Remus committed an act of sacrilege by jumping over the newly built city walls that Romulus had constructed. He was killed by Romulus and his men, and Romulus claimed that a similar fate awaited anyone else that attempted to cross those walls.

Romulus became king, and the city was named after him: Rome, founded, according to tradition, on April 21, 753 B.C. To increase the city's population, Romulus offered asylum to fugitives from other towns, and he found them wives by stealing women from the neighboring Sabine people during a festival. After reigning for 40 years, Romulus vanished in a storm at the place called Goat's Marsh (on the Campus Martius just outside the city) and was taken into heaven to become the god Quirinus.





There is a substantial amount of archeological evidence that a settlement occupied the Palatine Hill in Rome around the middle of the 8th Century B.C. Perhaps the myth of the founding of Rome is not completely mythical after all.

## The Monarchy: 753 B.C. to 510 B.C.

The best archaeological evidence suggests Rome *was* founded sometime between 700 and 800 B.C., quite close to the "legendary" founding date. At that time, Italy was divided between rival ethnic groups. The Latini were one such people, worshipping the god Jupiter, speaking the Latin language, and living in towns and villages on the plains of Latium in south central Italy. Bordering the Latini were the enigmatic Etruscan confederation, a loose coalition of politically independent cities in central and western Italy. Other neighbors were the fierce Gauls of northern Italy, some Greek-influenced city states in the south, and the primitive Samnite hill tribes of the Appenine mountains.

Rome began as a collection of Latini shepherds' villages on the hills near the mouth of the Tiber River. Gradually these villages coalesced into a sin-

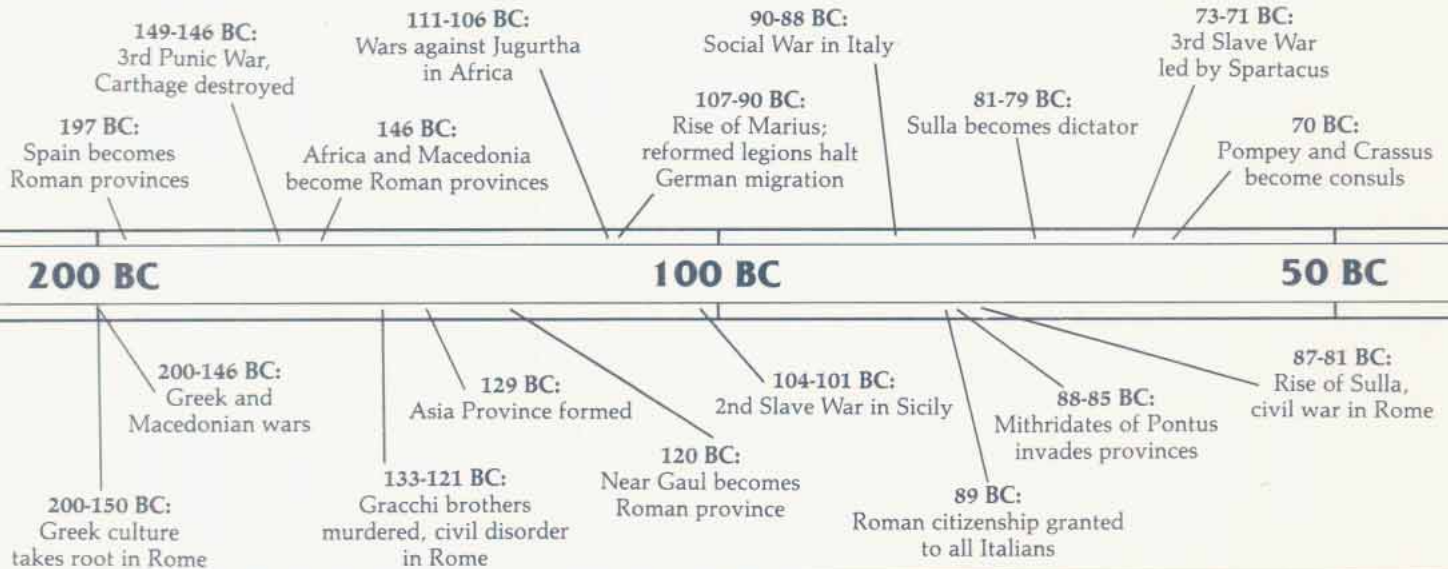
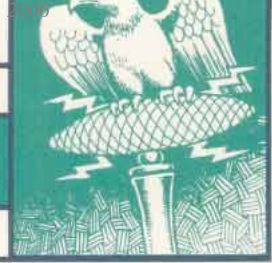
gle city. Rome's position astride important salt deposits and its geographical location near the center of Italy made it the most important of the Latini towns, eventually eclipsing other neighboring cities, such as Alba Longa.

Early in Rome's history, an adventurous Etruscan nobleman became king of Rome and founded a dynasty of Etruscan overlords who ruled Rome for perhaps 100 years. The last king of this line, Tarquin the Proud, was a hated tyrant, resented by the native Latin population. In 510 B.C., Rome's council of elders, known as the *Senate*, led an uprising and drove Tarquin from the city. Over the next two years, the Etruscans sent armies to regain control of the city. The citizens of Rome withstood them, although they were sorely pressed. According to legend, a Roman named Horatius Cocles saved the city by steadfastly guarding the one bridge over the River Tiber into Rome and single-handedly holding off an Etruscan army until that bridge could be destroyed.

## The Early Republic: 510-265 B.C.

With the Etruscans expelled from Rome, the senate abolished the monarchy, which was replaced by





an aristocratic oligarchy: the *Republic*. The Republic had no kings—for many centuries even the *idea* of a king was repugnant to Romans. Instead, power was vested in the senate and wielded by annually elected magistrates, the chief of whom were two *consuls*. Although these officials were elected by popular assemblies, Rome was not a democracy: people's votes were weighted according to wealth, and membership in the influential senate was limited to the oldest, richest families. These were the *patricians* who traced their lineage back to the original founding of Rome. The rest of the people—the *plebeians*—had little or no political influence. A plebeian might be a rich merchant or landowner, he could vote in the assembly, but no matter how wealthy he become through business, he couldn't join the senate or run for high office.

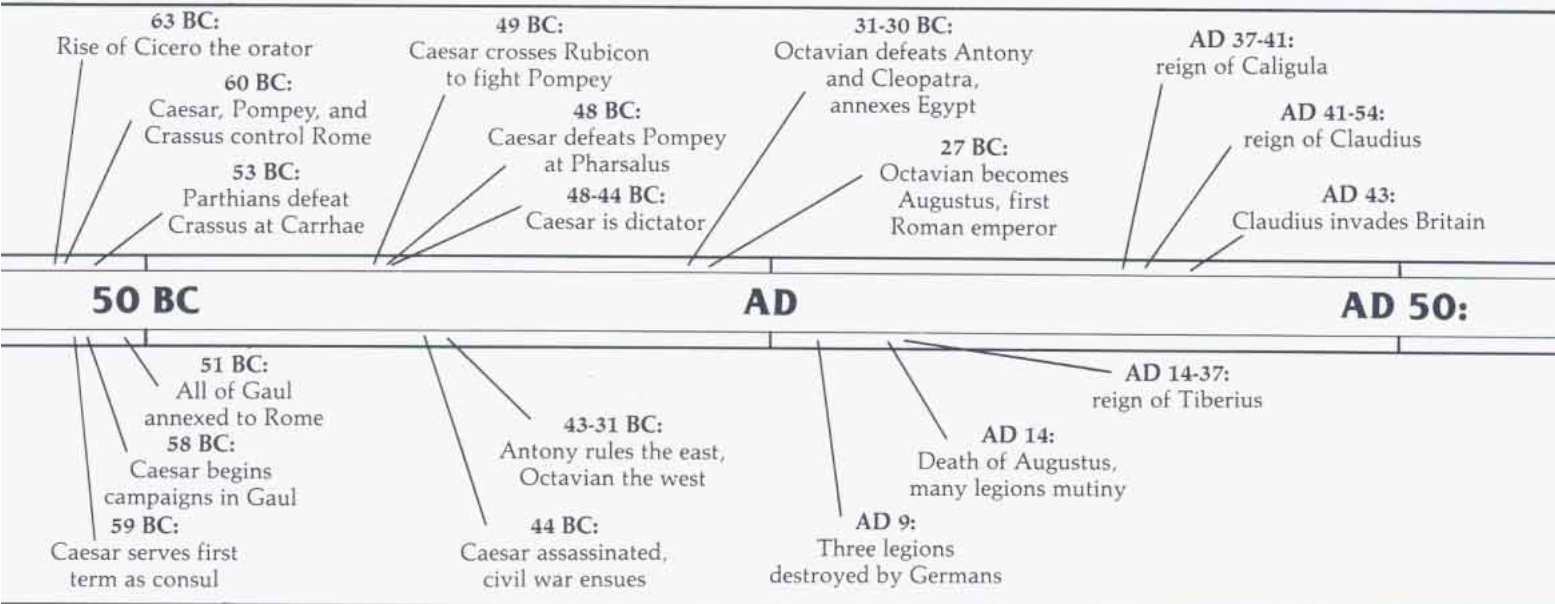
The early Republic was constantly at war with the neighboring Etruscans, Gauls, and Samnites. In a series of wars that lasted from 508 B.C. to 282 B.C., Rome defeated and then absorbed the Etruscans, cowed the Samnites, and pushed back the Italian Gauls. Rome suffered some reverses: in 390 B.C., a army of Gauls actually sacked the city and only a large ransom and skillful leadership saved Rome.

This traumatic event left Rome with a long-standing fear of "barbarian hordes" and a determination to never again be at their mercy.

But Rome bounced back from these defeats. Its leaders proved adroit in welding together a strong confederation of other Latin cities as allies and client states. In exchange for a limited form of Roman citizenship and the legal and economic benefits of citizenship associated with it, the other Latin-speaking towns of Italy recognized Rome's leadership in foreign policy and promised to provide Rome with troops. By 338 B.C., all the other Latin states were either absorbed by Rome or were closely allied client states. Rome also planted semi-autonomous colonies of settlers and merchants at strategic points throughout Italy and connected them with good roads. By 282 B.C., thanks to a mixture of diplomacy, mercantile imperialism, and brute force, Roman hegemony stretched over nearly all of central Italy.

At this time, the Greeks were the most powerful cultural force in the Mediterranean. But not since the death of Alexander the Great (back in 450 B.C.) had the many scattered Greek and Macedonian-influenced city states managed to stay united. Numerous wealthy Greek-speaking colonies existed in southern





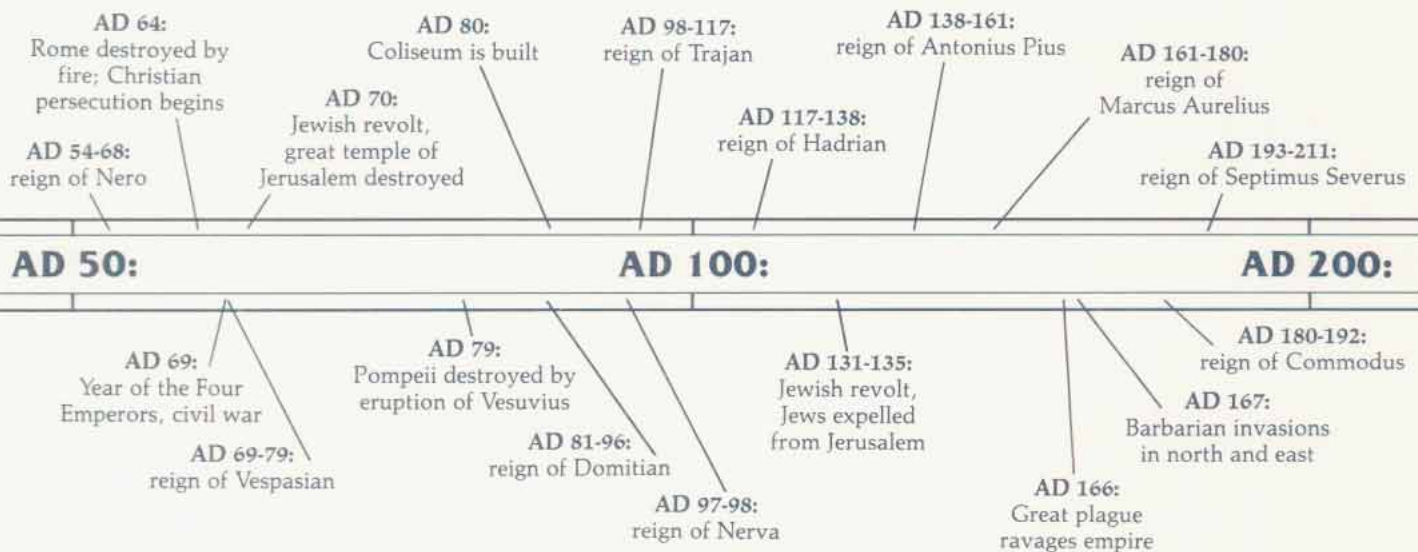
Italy and nearby Sicily, all squabbling amongst themselves. In 280 B.C., Rome took one of these cities, Thurri, under her protection. Another powerful Greek colony, Tarentum, resented Rome's interference in her sphere of influence. Tarentum picked a quarrel with Rome and went to a third Greek nation, Epirus, for help. Its king Pyrrhus had a habit of renting out his army to other cities in return for land and loot. In 280 B.C. Pyrrhus's forces—the classic Macedonian array of pikemen, cavalry, and elephants—began an invasion of Roman territory.

This was the greatest threat Rome had yet faced. Pyrrhus was a skilled tactical commander, while Rome's consuls were politicians first and generals second. However, the years of warfare in Italy had given Rome and its allies flexible sword-armed legions. These proved a match for Pyrrhus's army, which still used the old tactics of Alexander the Great. After four "Pyrrhic victories," in which Pyrrhus won battles but lost such large numbers of troops that he considered it hardly worth the fight, the mercenary king was defeated. The Romans followed up, determined to end the threat of the Greek colonies. By 270 B.C., all of southern Italy was either conquered by or allied with Rome.

Even as Rome tamed Italy, a series of political and constitutional struggles reshaped Roman society. When the Republic was formed there were two classes of citizen: patrician (the old landed aristocracy) and plebeian (everyone else). But the rapid expansion of Rome's influence had created new commercial opportunities and made some plebeians as rich as the old patrician families. Now they wanted a share in political power as well. At the same time, the poorer plebeians were groaning under shortages of food and land, as well as harsh laws of debt that turned impoverished farmers into slaves. In response to plebeian demands, Roman law was codified and written down. The power of the assemblies of the people were recognized, giving plebiscites the force of law. The plebeian order also developed its own powerful magistrates, the most important of which were the Tribunes of the People. By 337 B.C., plebeian members had gained admission to all major magisterial posts.

But while the boundaries of class had been stretched, those of money had not. Running for political office took vast sums of money, so to obtain political power, a plebeian had to either be fantastically wealthy or ally himself with a patrician. The





result was that the richer plebeians were co-opted by the patricians into a new plutocratic nobility of old money and new, while the poor's lot was marginally improved. But by the standards of the ancient world, this was an excellent compromise that kept Roman society stable for over two centuries.

## The Punic Wars: 275-146 B.C.

Rome's defeat of Pyrrhus's army and its conquest of Italy sent shock waves throughout the Mediterranean world. Many nations now saw Rome as a force to be reckoned with, and they entered into formal economic and political treaties with Rome, starting with Egypt in 273 B.C. The senate was eager to accept these alliances as long as Rome was the senior partner. Rome became the patron of many client kingdoms and cities. The senate was often asked to arbitrate disputes between its allies, further increasing Rome's prestige. With political influence came economic expansion, and Roman merchants established foreign enclaves on distant shores.

The phrase "Mare Nostrum" is Latin for "our sea." That was how the proud Romans started to think of the Mediterranean. But they had rivals. The

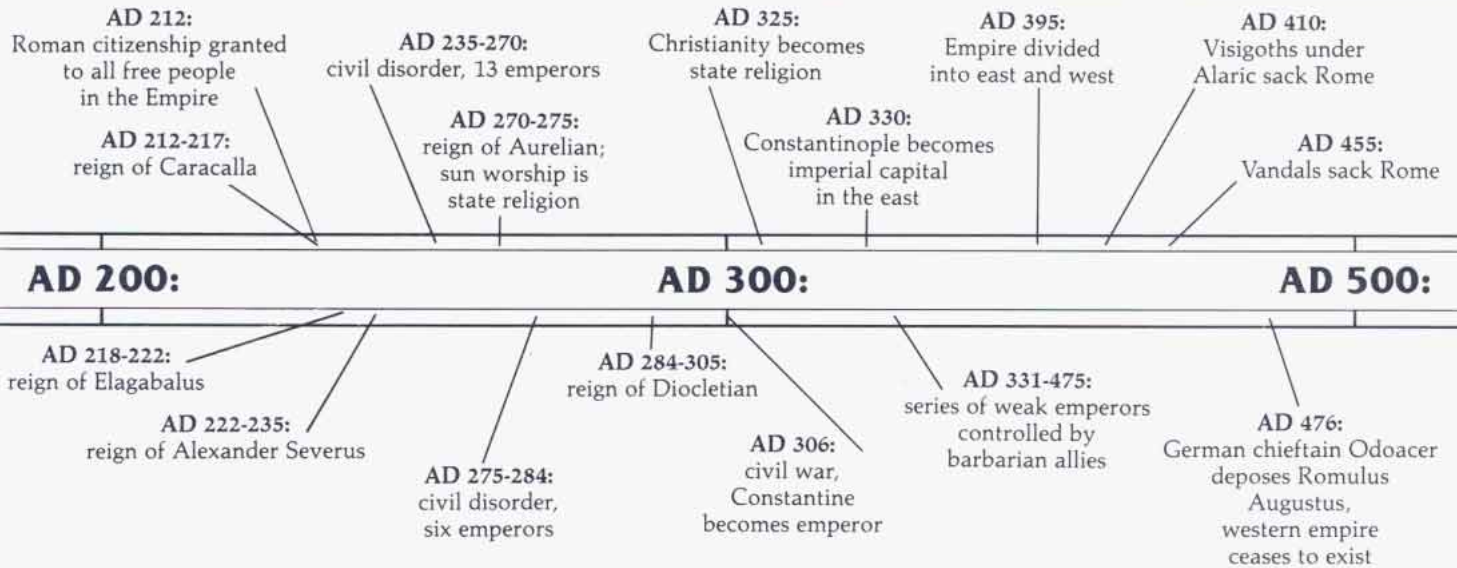
city of Carthage on the coast of north Africa was a Phoenician colony that trade had turned into the richest city in the Mediterranean. The merchant princes of Carthage also thought of the Mediterranean as "their sea." When they ran into the expanding Romans, sparks flew.

Rome fought three wars against Carthage, known collectively as the Punic Wars. Each was started by skirmishes between Roman and Carthaginian allies, but the wars were really one long struggle for hegemony over the entire Mediterranean.

The First Punic War was characterized by naval battles for control of the prosperous Greek colonies on the island of Sicily. Rome had started out without much of a navy. But Roman ingenuity soon developed a fleet of war vessels and cunning ram-and-board tactics to make best use of them. By the end of the war, Sicily was part of Rome's Empire, Carthage was humiliated and made to pay tribute, and Rome was far richer.

The Second Punic War was ignited in Spain. Rome had allied itself with several Spanish cities. Carthage wanted Spain for itself, and it attacked Rome's Spanish allies. Carthage also convinced Greece and Macedonia to half-heartedly join the war against Rome.





Carthage's greatest commander was Hannibal Barca, a military genius. He led a surprise invasion force of Carthaginians, mercenaries, and elephants over the Alps into Italy, and he ravaged the countryside around Rome for 15 years. Hannibal's generalship inflicted bloody defeats on several Roman armies. To stave off defeat, the Romans learned to avoid pitched battles, adopting a hit-and-run strategy that menaced Carthaginian supply lines and kept Hannibal from capturing Rome.

Meanwhile, desperate battles were taking place in Spain and at sea. Rome produced its own brilliant leader, Scipio Africanus. He trained his legions in more flexible tactics, and he was able to conquer Spain, preventing Hannibal from being properly reinforced. Scipio then invaded Africa, striking at Carthage itself. Hannibal was forced to withdraw from Italy. At the battle of Zama in 202 B.C., Scipio's army fought Hannibal's, and the Carthaginians were defeated. Rome withdrew from Africa but turned Spain into a province under its control.

Carthage was forced to pay a huge war indemnity to Rome, but it soon began to recover and rebuild its forces. Many in Rome remembered how close they

had come to defeat during Hannibal's invasion, and they agitated for a new war to crush the still-weak Carthage forever. The conservative statesmen Cato called for Carthage's total destruction; the influential Scipio family, magnanimous in victory, urged restraint. But Cato's faction won: "Carthage must be destroyed!" Rome's allies were persuaded to harass Carthage, and Carthage struck back. This gave the senate a legal pretext for intervention, and a Roman invasion force was soon besieging Carthage itself.

Carthage was unready for so swift a response, and they prepared to surrender. They were in the midst of handing over hostages and weapons when they heard the Roman terms: the city was to be destroyed! The Carthaginians decided to fight. Their city held out courageously for three long years, but in 146 B.C., Scipio Aemelianus's army stormed and sacked the city. Carthage was reduced to dust and memories, her land sown with salt, her very gods removed to Rome. The territories that had belonged to Carthage were transformed into the Roman province of Africa.

While the Second and Third Punic Wars were ongoing, Rome was also involved in fighting in Macedonia, whose strong monarchy had supported





Carthage and threatened Roman interests in the eastern Mediterranean. From 200 B.C. to 146 B.C., Rome fought a series of successful wars against Macedonia and Greece, turning them into client states. When Greece rebelled in 146 B.C., the Romans burnt the ancient city of Corinth as punishment and annexed all of Greece and Macedonia as Roman provinces.

But even as Rome conquered Greece, Greece also conquered Rome. The close contact with Greece—and the many Greek slaves brought to Rome—impressed the Romans with the glories of Hellenic civilization. Roman aristocrats envied the highly developed Greek philosophy, rhetoric, art, and writing. Despite the opposition of conservative Romans like Cato (which led to a law expelling all Greek philosophers from the city in 173 B.C.), all things Greek became first fashionable and then firmly embedded in Roman society. Although Latin was the language of Rome, the Greek language was a mark of culture. From about 150 B.C. on, no upper class Roman could even count himself a true aristocrat if he was not fluent in Greek.

Beginning in this period, life in the city of Rome itself became increasingly cosmopolitan. Rome gained a large immigrant population from Greece, Gaul, Spain, Egypt, Africa, and Asia. Strange foreign gods entered the city, notably the earth-mother Cybele from Asia and the Bacchic mystery cults from Greece, whose frenzied rituals disturbed conservative Romans but attracted a wide following.

Rome had won great riches in the Punic and Macedonian wars, but this had gone to enrich an already wealthy upper class, providing them with mercantile opportunities, luxuries, land, and slaves. Meanwhile, the backbone of Rome, the lower middle class of plebeian farmers, became increasingly impoverished. The Roman army was a citizen's militia that conscripted all free men who could afford their own weapons and armor. But this law had been designed before Rome acquired an overseas Empire. Thanks to the length of the Macedonian and Punic Wars, many men had been sent overseas to fight for years, leaving their farms to fall into neglect. They returned victorious only to find themselves in debt to rapacious moneylenders or unable to compete with the vast slave-run farms of the aristocracy.

## **The Fall of the Republic: 133 to 44 B.C.**

This was a period of internal turmoil. Rome's

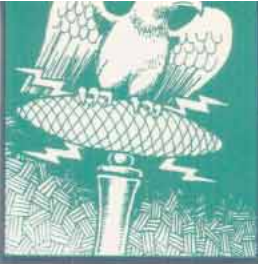
steadfast Italian allies complained of injustice: they died in Rome's wars and were being squeezed out of their land by Roman loan sharks, unable even to defend themselves in Roman court because they were not full citizens. Debt and poverty also crushed native Romans. With the impending collapse of the small freeholder, the ranks of the urban poor swelled. The city of Rome's population exceeded a million citizens, and constant grain imports were needed to feed them. Something had to be done.

These problems led to a conflict between factions of conservative and populist aristocrats, known as the *optimates* and *populares*. The state owned vast public lands called the *Ager Publicus*. The populares advocated parcelling this out to individual farmers, along with a program of lowered interest rates or debt cancellation. But many influential Romans—especially the senators—made money renting out the public land or had supporters among the rich money lenders. The optimates in the senate repeatedly blocked reform laws. Attempts to bypass the senate by using the Tribunes of the People and the Popular Assemblies threatened the senate's traditional control of financial affairs and polarized political opinion. Violence became a feature of public meetings and elections, as both sides hired mobs of thugs and gladiators. Several politicians—among them the Gracchi brothers, leaders of the populares' faction—were murdered or died in street riots.

The political stakes were higher because Rome now ruled an empire in all but name: Italy, Greece, Macedonia, Spain, and parts of the African coast were all under its control. In 129 B.C., Rome acquired the new and wealthy Asia Province when a dying king willed his kingdom to Rome rather than see it divided among squabbling heirs. Roman provincial governors and private "tax farmers" brutally squeezed the provinces to pay for cheap grain for Rome's urban masses and line their own pockets. Military campaigns increased Rome's domain, adding the southern coast of Gaul—what is now France—to the Roman hegemony. It became the province of Near Gaul in 120 B.C.

Rome was certainly the strongest empire in the western world. But it was an empire beset on all sides. In Africa, civil war flared between rival kings. When the senate's mediation failed, Roman legions became embroiled in a hit-and-run desert war for control of Numidia. Waves of migrating German tribes seeking wealth and living space poured into Gaul and Italy, crushing all in their path. In Asia, King Mithridates of Pontus thought to challenge





Rome's hegemony. He carved out a mighty empire in the east. His forces "liberated" Asia Province (which rose up to massacre tens of thousands of hated Roman tax farmers and merchants) and fomented a coup in Greece while his fleets and armies raged across the Mediterranean. A succession of slave revolts broke out in Sicily and Italy. Out-of-control piracy disrupted commerce and threatened Rome's fragile grain supply. Worst of all, in Italy itself, Rome's long-time allies demanded greater freedoms. When the optimates in the senate spurned them, the Italians rose in a bloody Social War that ended when Rome finally granted them citizenship.

This incessant warfare changed the nature of the Roman army and with it Rome itself. To fight the war in Africa and hold off the German hordes, a brilliant general named Gaius Marius abandoned the traditional conscript militia and instead created and trained an all-volunteer regular army. Marius added a variety of tactical and organizational reforms to make the Roman army faster-moving, harder-hitting, and easier to recruit. Under his own leadership and that of inspired captains, such as his deputy (and rival) Sulla, these new-model legions ended the war in Africa, slaughtered the German invaders, fought the Italian rebels to a standstill, and drove Mithridates back to the east.

But there was a cost. The new legions were no longer raised by the Roman state, but by the individual general, who saw to their recruitment, training, equipment, pay, and rewards. As such, the soldiers' first loyalty was to their commanders, not to Rome. For the next century, this had a profound effect on Roman politics.

The pattern went something like this: An ambitious senator beggared himself winning election to high political office, usually associating himself in the process with either the populist or conservative factions. As was traditional, he then received the governorship of a province—preferably one beset by external enemies or internal revolt. He raised armies to crush Rome's enemies and win glory, conquer new territory, and make himself and his men rich from the spoils of war. Then, all too often, political rivals in the Roman senate became jealous of his successes. To protect his own life or further his own political agenda, the victorious general led his loyal veterans back to Rome to intimidate the senate and people and massacre or exile his political enemies. He became a virtual dictator until his death or retirement.

This sequence was repeated under Marius (who died before becoming a true dictator) and then Sulla,

each of whom first saved Rome from external enemies, then marched against Rome itself. The plutocrat Crassus took the first steps when he crushed Spartacus's slave revolt and attempted to conquer Parthia, but his generalship could not match his ambition, and he led an entire Roman army to its death on the eastern plains. The diplomat-general Pompey brought Rome vast new territories in Asia and the Middle East, but he remained loyal to the senate.

Julius Caesar followed in the footsteps of Sulla: he allied himself with Pompey's prestige and Crassus's money, became a consul and provincial governor, and conquered all of Gaul. But the senate and Pompey grew jealous and plotted against him. To preserve his life and dignity, Caesar marched on Rome, defeated his foes in a string of campaigns in Egypt and Spain, and proclaimed himself dictator for life. Unlike Sulla and Marius, Caesar chose not to massacre his enemies, instead beginning political reforms. His generosity led to his assassination in 44 B.C. by senators who feared he sought to become a king. His death sparked a civil war.

The entire Roman world was plunged into another round of chaos as the vast armies of Caesar's lieutenants and assassins fought for control. The victors were Caesar's adopted son Octavian and the general Marcus Antonius. They jointly ruled the Republic, until Antony's alliance with the Egyptian queen Cleopatra provided a pretext for Octavian to turn against him. In 31 B.C., the forces of Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra, leaving him master of the Roman world.

## The Julio-Claudians: 27 B.C.-A.D. 65

When we think of Rome, this is the period that springs to mind. From the ashes of the civil war, the Roman Empire was born. Octavian took the name Augustus and the new position of Princeps, or first citizen. He claimed he had restored the Republic, but, in effect, he was emperor, a king in all but name. However, he preserved the senate in a weakened form as an advisory body, and he kept many of the forms of Republican government.

Augustus was a conservative, careful ruler. He deliberately tried to restore respect for the Roman religion and family values. But his primary goal was stability, and it was through his efforts that Rome ruled an Empire that would last for more than three hundred years. Augustus established a strong





bureaucracy, the Imperial Household, recruiting its members primarily from commoners personally loyal to him. Although not immune to bribery or corruption, the bureaucracy evolved into a capable institution whose members could keep the Empire running even when the emperor himself was incompetent.

The city of Rome was not neglected: Augustus established an ambitious building program. He boasted truthfully that he “found Rome a city of brick and left it one of marble.” Numerous impressive public buildings and monuments were created, but also very practical food markets and aqueducts to make sure that its million citizens received adequate supplies of grain and water. Remembering the mobs and disorder that had plagued Rome, he formed the *vigiles* to act as a fire brigade and the urban cohorts to serve as a police force. Finally, the elite Praetorian Guard were created to safeguard the emperor’s own person and provide a powerful reserve against any provincial governor or general who sought to lead his troops against the Empire.

Using his own (and Caesar’s) old legions as its nucleus, Augustus set up a standing army to guard the frontiers. Augustus used these legions to stabilize Rome’s borders, making a treaty with Parthia and extending the Gallo-German frontier to the Rhine-Danube rivers.

A crushing military defeat kept Rome from conquering Germany, but Galatia, the Balkans, Spain, and Judaea were pacified and turned into Roman provinces. The growth of towns was encouraged, and many colonies of Roman citizens were founded to “Romanize” the provinces. Using an idea popular in Asia, Augustus encouraged the foundation of an Imperial Cult that worshiped the Roman Emperor as a god. With the frontiers secured and a stable central government and bureaucracy, the Mediterranean world entered a new era of cosmopolitanism, industrial progress, and commercial prosperity.

After Augustus, the Imperial succession was through his heirs: Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. This period saw gradual expansion. Britain became part of the Empire, more of North Africa was absorbed, and Roman citizenship was extended to all Gauls who could read and speak Latin. The provinces were increasingly Romanized, adopting Latin language and culture. The civil service bureaucracy became an institution. The Praetorian Guard also increased in power, becoming a virtual secret police used to purge real or imagined traitors.

Augustus, Claudius and (sometimes) Tiberius were

“good emperors.” They could recognize and appoint skilled civil servants, provincial governors, and generals who kept the peace, stabilized the frontiers, and expanded the Empire. The only real danger came as they aged: there was no formalized scheme for succession. As the emperor grew older and weaker, scandals, plots, and counter-plots swirled about the Imperial court as people sought to win the favor of the fading ruler or his likely heirs. The emperor’s family, his favorites, the bureaucracy, and the commanders of the Praetorian Guard were all involved. The emperor’s wife was often a formidable player: Claudius, for instance, survived an assassination plot by his first wife, only to be poisoned by his second.

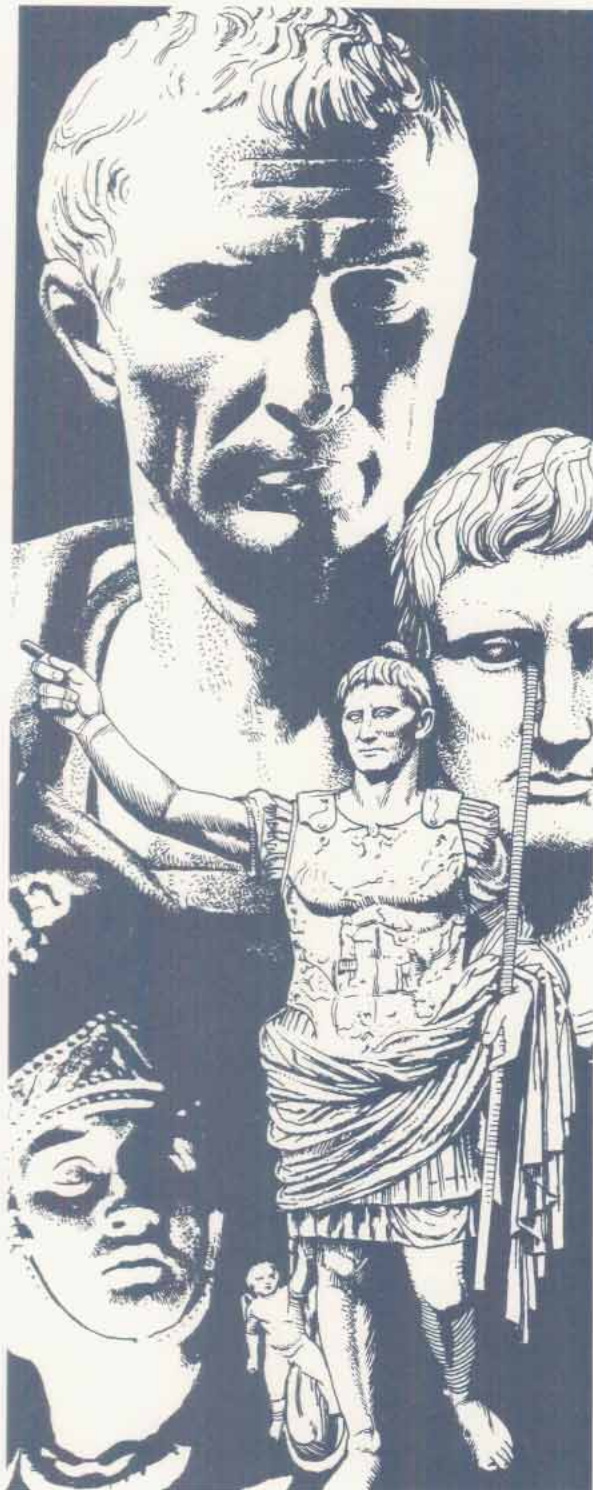
Caligula and Nero were “bad emperors”—autocratic, power hungry, and possibly mad. They were influenced by court favorites (whose lives could be suddenly cut short if they offended the emperor), squandered the treasury on extravagant whims, and devoted themselves to decadent pleasure. Anyone who opposed them risked being murdered by the Praetorian Guard or sentenced to die in the arena. Lacking central direction, the provinces fell into disorder, leading to wars with Parthia and uprisings in troubled areas like Judaea and Britain. The legions were kept busy, but the rebellions were ruthlessly crushed in the end. Their reigns ended when their subjects and the Praetorian Guard conspired to overthrow and murder them.

## The Flavians: A.D. 66-96

The chaos following the death of Nero led to civil war—“the year of the four emperors.” Legions appointed their own generals as commanders, and struggled for the throne, while rebels took advantage of the confusion to lead uprisings in Judaea and Germany. The winner of the civil war was Vespasian, who founded a relatively stable Imperial dynasty known as the Flavians.

The Flavians (Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian) restored civilian government and limited the influence of the military, although they took more powers on themselves. They reformed the civil service, replacing many of the freedmen with upper-class citizens, and they made the senate more representative by admitting more provincial members. They chose to strengthen the frontiers rather than conquer more territory, though in Britain Roman rule was extended as far north as Scotland. Under the Flavians, the provinces enjoyed relative peace and prosperity. However, the wilful Domitian in his last





years ignored the senate's advice and ruled as a tyrant after the fashion of Nero. In A.D. 96 he was assassinated. The senate—rather than the army—picked a new emperor, a skilled lawyer named Nerva.

### The Five Good Emperors: A.D. 96-180

The emperor Nerva (A.D. 96-98) had an uneventful reign, but he is best remembered for institutionalizing a system of succession in which the emperor picked a successor by ability rather than by birth. This gave Rome its "five good emperors"—Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, all of them solid soldiers and statesmen.

The "good emperors" ruled over what historian Edward Gibbon called "the happiest era known to man," the Pax Romanum in which the Empire was internally stable and Rome was unchallenged ruler of the known world. By this time, Roman trade routes reached as far as Scandinavia and China. Provincial cities grew in size and sophistication as Rome's urban culture spread around the Mediterranean. Public-spirited city officials spent lavishly, and the marble forums, arenas, baths, and aqueducts of Rome found their counterparts in Gaul, Britain, Africa, and Spain. Christianity thrived and spread throughout the Empire.

Rome was the center of the Empire, but non-Italians were becoming increasingly important. The Spanish general Trajan (99 A.D.) became the first non-Roman to become emperor. Legions were also encouraged to recruit locally. Although this was a solution to the increasing difficulty of finding Italian troops, these provincial soldiers, although still trained in the Roman fashion, had only a passing acquaintance with Latin culture. Only the Praetorian Guard remained fully Roman.

The emperors took regular inspection tours through the provinces to make sure that things were running smoothly. But while the Empire was internally peaceful, there was almost constant fighting on the borders as the legions kept intruders from penetrating into the Empire and aggressively carried the fight beyond its borders. The Empire expanded to the largest size it would ever reach. Dacia (north of the Balkans) was conquered, and Parthia was pushed back. Many of the frontiers were heavily fortified: Hadrian's Wall in Scotland is one example.





## Decline of the Empire:

### A.D. 193-306

Marcus Aurelius made the mistake of choosing his son as emperor instead of picking the best man as his predecessors had done. The result was chaos and mismanagement. From then on, the emperors became more autocratic, influenced by oriental practices. Some claimed to be living gods. But although the emperor may have claimed his power came from god, it actually came from the army. No formalized rules of succession existed. When an emperor died or proved too incompetent, rival generals would fight for power, plunging Rome into civil war. This left the frontiers undefended, and whole provinces seceded or were overrun by barbarians—mostly Goths and Sassanids. In some years, emperors came and went like leaves in a storm. Plague stalked the streets of Rome, pirates ruled the seas unchecked. The Balkans, Gaul, Greece, Northern Italy, and Asia were all vulnerable.

While despots came and went, this period was most noted for the increasing power of the equestrian-run bureaucracy, the Praetorian Guard, and the legions; the senate was long since in decline. The civilian constitution of Augustus began to wither, replaced by autocratic military rule in which the emperor's basis of power was more and more the iron fist of the legions.

Former soldiers were recruited into the civil service, erasing distinctions between military and civilian authority. The emphasis on military rule meant the frontiers were well defended when civil wars were not going on, but the treasury was less-well served. The emperors began the practice of giving "donatives" of land and money to legions to ensure their loyalty. To pay for this, the currency was devalued and taxes were increased.

All distinction between Italian and provincial citizens was abolished, making everyone in the Empire into Romans—probably to create a larger tax base. Industrial and commercial organizations became hereditary guilds. Trade and commerce had suffered in the repeated civil wars and the old coinage was mostly worthless, with many people reduced to barter. Some emperors attempted reforms, but these were only small bandages applied to a gaping wound. In the new poorer, less-secure Empire, the center of life turned from big city to country village. Landed gentry began fortifying their villas, and many peasants on large estates were bound to the land as serfs.

Nevertheless, Latin literature, art, and architecture remained highly developed. The darkness of the

time caused many people to turn to religion. Philosophic dialogue flourished as Christian intellectuals and clergymen engaged in vigorous competition with Mithraic priests and Neoplatonic philosophers for the minds and souls of men.

But by A.D. 300, the Rome of Augustus had become a distant memory. Feudalism was waiting in the wings.

## The Long Fall of Rome:

### A.D. 306-476

The victor in a five-way civil war, Constantine was the first Christian emperor. He didn't start out that way—previously he seems to have been a sun cultist worshiping either the Unconquered Sun or the very similar soldier's deity Mithras. But in A.D. 312, he switched to Christianity. According to one legend, he saw a Christian vision in the sky over his army, but more likely he realized Christianity was gaining in strength, decided he could live with it because it was monotheistic like his sun worship, and chose it as a unifying force for the Empire. In A.D. 325, Christianity and the Roman state were truly united when Constantine presided over a council of Christian bishops at Nicea to determine the future of their religion. Christianity, previously peaceful, became an instrument of the state, and vice versa. Constantine himself remained tolerant of paganism, but his successors did not always share this tolerance.

Constantine's most lasting achievement was the creation of the city of Constantinople, the new capital of the Empire, on the site of the old Greek city of Byzantium near the mouth of the Black Sea. It replaced Rome as the capital and became one of the great cities of the world.

Constantine appointed his four sons as subordinate rulers, but after his death in A.D. 337, they began fighting among themselves. Their successors didn't last long. Rome's weakness was obvious to outsiders. In Britain, the Picts and Scots were swarming over Hadrian's Wall, rebellions flared in Africa, and the Goths menaced Rome from the north. A Roman army was defeated and its emperor slain at the Battle of Adrianople. The Goths swarmed into Europe, occupying most of Gaul. They were only the first of a series of barbarian invaders. Rome's traditional infantry legions were gradually replaced by mercenary barbarian cavalry hired to protect the provinces against other barbarians.

The divisions between the eastern and western empires become more pronounced. The empire of the East became the Greek-influenced Byzantine





Empire. Because of the strong defensive position of Constantinople and the reserves of military and agricultural manpower in Asia Minor, it survived for nearly a thousand more years. It was a center of learning and civilization in the Dark Ages, holding out against all foes until the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in A.D. 1453.

Unlike the Byzantine Empire, the West did not long survive the partition. It was no longer ruled from Rome; the capital became the more easily defensible Italian port city of Ravenna. Most of the western Empire's soldiers were barbarian mercenaries who would turn against Rome if they felt they had not received enough wealth or honors. In 410 A.D., a disgruntled force under Alaric the Goth did just that. Traitors opened Rome's gates, and the Goths sacked the city in an orgy of violence and looting that lasted for three days. Alaric might have made himself emperor, but he died of illness before he could continue his conquest and his host fell apart.

The western Empire was in ruins. People lived like serfs under military overlords. Travel and trade declined. The remaining emperors were mere puppets of their barbarian mercenaries as fresh waves of Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Huns, and Vandals entered the Empire. Rome was sacked again by the Vandals in A.D. 455. The last western emperor, Romulus Augustus, was deposed in A.D. 476 by the German general Odoacer who became master of Rome. The Roman Empire was no more; the Dark Ages had begun. But Roman law, language, customs, and even portions of the Roman bureaucracy survived to form the basis of culture throughout the western world. And of course, the Roman Church remained, keeping the Latin culture and the western brand of Christianity alive through the Dark Ages and into the Medieval period and beyond.

## Suggested Reading

There is much, much more to Rome's history than this summary can cover. Besides excellent factual works on Roman history and sociology, there are also many fascinating films and novels set in ancient Rome. Listed here are a few titles of interest to DMs and players:

## Reference Books

Cornell, Tim and Matthews, John. *Atlas of the Roman World*. A first-rate pictorial history of Rome.

Grant, Michael. *History of Rome*. A good, up-to-date survey of Rome's history.

Hammond, N.G.L., and Scullard, H.H., editors. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. This immense work should be available in most libraries. It includes essays on everything from ancient alchemy to the Roman postal service.

Landels, J.G. *Engineering in the Ancient World*. If you want to know how a catapult, an aqueduct, or a Roman galley works, this is the book for you.

Shelton, Jo Ann. *As the Romans Did*. What the Romans themselves wrote about everyday life in their civilization. Heavily annotated.

## Historical Novels

Bulwer-Lytton, E.G. *The Last Days of Pompeii*. Gripping historical novel set in the Roman resort town in A.D. 79, prior to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

Graves, Robert. *I Claudius*. Why being emperor isn't a bed of roses. An excellent source for a political campaign.

McCollough, Colleen. *First Man in Rome; The Grass Crown*. A first-rate historical novelist tackles the age of Marius, Sulla, and Julius Caesar. Gripping and erudite.

## Comic Books

*Asterix the Gaul* by Uderzo and Goscinny. One small Gaulish village resists the might of Rome.

## Classical Authors

Interesting works written by Roman citizens that are available in translation include:

Caesar's *Gallic War*. Everything you ever wanted to know about the art of politics and generalship and the Roman view of Gauls.

Frontinus's *Strategems*. A Roman general (he conquered Wales) reveals his favorite collection of dirty tricks.

Pliny's *Natural History*. A fascinating look at the way the Romans saw the world.

Suetonius's *The Twelve Caesars*. Describes the lives of the first Roman emperors. Full of entertaining anecdotes.

Virgil's *Aeneid*. In this classical Roman epic, Aeneas flees the ashes of Troy to start a new life in Italy and lay the foundations for the Roman Empire.



## Characters

*"Rome is a city-state formed by the coming together of many nations; in Rome you must endure much treachery, deceit, vices of every kind, arrogance of many men, scorn, malevolence, pride, hatred, and harassment. Only one man can adapt to such a variety of characters and forms of expression—you!"*

—Cicero, Roman Orator

### Who is a Roman?

A Roman is someone with Roman citizenship, or more generally, anyone who has adopted the Latin language and Roman culture. Until 98 B.C., most citizens were born in the city of Rome or its rural hinterland. After 98 B.C., Roman citizenship extended to most of Italy. During the Empire, Roman colonies were spread throughout the most important provinces: "Romans" could come from Gaul, Spain, or Africa, for instance.

**Foreign Characters:** Rome was a cosmopolitan society, but Romans had a distinct sense of their own superiority. Greeks were considered civilized, although not quite the equal of Romans, but Gauls, Africans, Egyptians, Spaniards, Britons, Germans, and other foreigners whose native language wasn't Latin or Greek were generally looked down on as "barbarians."

Rules for creating Greeks or barbarians are beyond the scope of this book—DMs should refer to other historical sourcebooks. However, Rome had a large community of foreign immigrants and freed slaves who had adopted Latin culture and customs. Such a character may look like a Gaul or African and perhaps have a foreign accent, but he dresses, thinks, and acts like a Roman. Players may use the rules presented in this chapter to create "Romanized" foreigners. However, a character of foreign ancestry (as opposed to a Roman born in a colony in a foreign province) should devote one proficiency slot to his mother tongue (if using the optional proficiency rules) and he may not be of equestrian or senatorial social rank (if rolling on the birthright table, treat any such result as "no birthright.").

### Races

Non-human characters are not allowed in a Roman campaign. Rome inherited the Greek tales of centaurs, fauns, and other sylvan races, but by the time of the Republic these were simply myths.

The Roman bogeymen were the real or imagined peoples living far beyond the Roman frontiers. When

Republican Romans first heard tales of the migratory hordes of ferocious yellow-haired German giants from Germany, the black Africans, or the chariot-riding Britons with their tree-worshipping Druids, they seemed every bit as fantastic as any mythical creature! Of course, as Rome expanded, it encountered these people and they ceased to be mythical—replaced by rumors of the peoples living beyond their lands, like the wild Pictish tribes who terrorized the Britons!

### Birthright

All Romans are not born equal. Some PCs may come from upper-class families or be born lucky; others may suffer from some scandal or misfortune. Players may choose to roll on the birthright table to see if their PCs have any special advantages. Optionally, the DM may want to assign birthright. For instance, if the campaign is going to be politically oriented, at least one character should be of senatorial rank or family. Similarly, in a gladiatorial campaign, few characters will be upper-class equestrians or senators.

The Birthright table is geared to male characters. For an interpretation of the results for women, see the "Female Characters" section on page 33.

**Table 1: Birthright Table**

D20 Roll	Birthright
1	Senatorial Rank
2	Senatorial Family
3-4	Equestrian Rank
5-6	Equestrian Family
7-8	Impoverished Patrician
9	Military Family
10-13	No Birthright
14	Inheritance
15	Arranged Marriage*
16	Handsome*
17	Felix*
18	Favor*
19	Ugly*
20	Family Scandal*

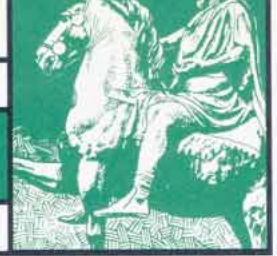
On an asterisked result, the character receives the listed birthright and rolls again on the table using 1d12.

A player who rolls results 1-6 has a PC born into one of Rome's two upper classes, the equestrians or senators.









Characters who are not from an equestrian or senatorial background are assumed to have been born ordinary Roman citizens (plebeians). However, with DM permission, a plebeian PC may instead be a foreign immigrant, a slave, or a freedman (an ex-slave).

## Explanation of Birthrights

**Senatorial Rank:** The character's father was a Roman senator, one of the elite who governed Rome. He is now dead, but the PC is his eldest child.

The PC has inherited a townhouse (*domus*) in Rome and a country villa and farmland or real estate. His property has a total value of 250,000 denarii. This (barely) qualifies him as a member of the senatorial order.

The character is not yet an actual senator—to become one, he will have to follow the *Cursus Honorum*, “the road of honor,” winning election to junior government posts (and possibly doing military service as a legionary officer) before he can take his father's place.

Rents and income from the PC's farm land earns him  $5,000 + (1d6 \times 50)$  denarii per month. This is enough to maintain himself and his household at the “wealthy” lifestyle expected of his social class. Selling the property is unthinkable, since that would mean a loss of his social rank.

Any senatorial family will have connections among Rome's elite. Roll 1d3 twice: the first is the number of wealthy equestrians or powerful senators who are allies of his family. The second is the number who are bitter foes! The DM should create these as NPCs.

**Senatorial Family:** The character's family is of senatorial rank, but the PC's father is still very much alive and head of the family. The PC receives an allowance of 1,250 denarii per month to maintain a middle-class lifestyle: the allowance will continue as long as he obeys his father! He may use the money to live in a separate apartment, or he may live in his parent's townhouse.

When his father dies (the DM can assume a 10% chance per game year) the PC may inherit wealth and status as per senatorial rank, above—if he's been a dutiful son!

Create the PC's father as an NPC with his own personality, goals, and concerns. Roman law makes a father absolute master of his children, even if they are adults. The DM may use this relationship to generate adventure ideas. The father, who is a Roman senator, should keep his son hopping with requests

to do his bidding. If the father is still active in the senate, the character may be used as a pawn in his father's political maneuvers. The character will be criticized if he does anything to bring scandal to the family (e.g., perhaps associating with adventurers of lower social class). The father may even use his influence to get the PC into a (possibly unwanted!) arranged marriage, or a government or army post—all for his son's own good of course!

The PC does not have to follow his father's requests, but if he does not, he may have his allowance cut off and even lose his chance at inheriting the family property. To give the character some freedom of action, the DM may decide the father is either indulgent or old and ailing. But in either case, the PC had better jump to humor any of the old man's occasional whims if he wants to make sure that he, and not another son or cousin, gets a decent inheritance!

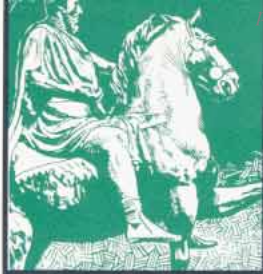
**Equestrian Rank:** The character is of the equestrian order, the Roman upper middle class. The PC's father has recently died and left the character a substantial inheritance: business interests, money, and property valued at 100,000 denarii, just enough to qualify the character in the census as a member of the equestrian order. The character's property and business earns him  $1,250 + (1d6 \times 50)$  denarii per month after expenses. This is barely enough to pay the living expenses of a middle-class lifestyle (which is certainly upper class compared to how most plebeians live).

The DM should create the details of the PC's business interests (he may be part or sole owner of mines, factories, farms, or even a gladiatorial school or chariot racing team). Some of these interests could be located in distant or troubled areas of the Roman Empire. The DM should feel free to threaten these businesses (and the PC's income!) with corrupt managers, sabotage by rivals, banditry, rebellion, or barbarian invasion. This can even provide a first adventure, as the PC goes off to inspect his distant property and find out what is behind the reports of trouble!

The character's property will always include a medium-sized *domus* (townhouse) in Rome or whatever city the campaign is set in. The PC can sell some or all of his property, but this isn't advisable—unless he maintains 100,000 denarii in property, he will no longer be a equestrian.

**Equestrian Family:** The character's father is a wealthy businessman and member of the equestrian order. The character receives an allowance of 1,250 denarii per month in addition to his starting wealth,





to maintain a middle-class lifestyle—as long as he obeys his father. He may live in a separate apartment or in his father's house. When his father dies (the DM can assume a 10% chance per year) the character will inherit as noted under equestrian rank, above, if he has been a dutiful son. The father may call upon the PC to perform tasks for him (perhaps sending him off to the army to better himself or to distant parts of the Empire to handle business problems). The father may also interfere in the PC's life in other ways, arranging a marriage, perhaps, or pressing him to seek election to a political office, such as Tribune of the Soldiers. The PC's father, his mother, and 1d4-1 siblings should all be created as NPCs.

**Impoverished Patrician:** The character's family was once of senatorial rank—in fact, they were patricians, descended from the original founders of Rome! But over the years, fortune has not smiled on the family. The PC did not receive enough of an inheritance to bring him into the senatorial order. Instead, he is merely an equestrian.

Besides his character class's starting wealth, the character owns a domus (house) in Rome and some real estate or property in the countryside valued at 100,000 denarii. His rents earn him 1,250 + (1d6 × 50) denarii per month, enough to qualify the character as an equestrian and pay middle class living expenses.

The character may wish to regain the family honor and win a position in the senate. This means acquiring both wealth and power, perhaps through a combination of deft political maneuvering, marriage, and winning glory as an officer in the legions. The one thing the PC won't want to do is become involved in commerce: this is considered taboo for a patrician! Roll 1d4/2 twice: the first roll shows the number of wealthy equestrians or powerful senators who were allies or friends of his ancient family. The second is the number who are ancient foes! The DM should create these as NPCs.

**Military Family:** The character's father was a career soldier who rose through the ranks to become a centurion noted for his valor. The PC is of common plebeian rank, but if he encounters members of his father's own legion, he gets a +1 reaction bonus from them due to his father's fame. If he doesn't live up to his father's reputation for courage, however, this will turn into a -2 reaction due to dashed expectations! His father's reputation also means that, should he also become a Roman legionary, he will be picked out as potential officer material and is more likely to be chosen for special missions.

The PC has only the normal wealth of his social

class, but he has inherited his father's weapons and armor—a *gladius* (short sword), *scutum* (medium shield), two pila, and legionary armor appropriate to the period (*lorica hamata* or *segmenta*). Whether he can use these heirlooms depends on his character class, of course.

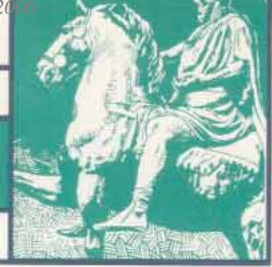
The DM may also give the PC some other token of his father's service in foreign lands—perhaps a cryptic treasure map or other item that can lead to an adventure. Also, any of the other PCs' fathers may have served in (or commanded) the same legion as the character's famous father—perhaps even had his life saved by him. This can give two PCs a natural bond despite different social classes.

**Inheritance:** The character's father or mother was a successful plebeian businessman or farmer, although not wealthy enough to qualify for the equestrian order. He inherited a farm or share in a family business worth (1d20 × 1,000) denarii. The PC may choose to sell his property; if he does not it will bring in 1% of its value in income each month. This isn't enough to bring the character to an equestrian or senatorial rank, but it may be a useful stepping-stone! The character has partners, underlings, or relatives who manage it on a day-to-day basis, leaving the PC free to adventure. The DM should work out details of the adventure and occasionally have events—thrift, extortion by criminals, crooked partners, or the like—threaten the income, forcing the PC to intervene to protect it.

**Favor:** The PC is owed a favor by an important senator (in a Republican campaign) or perhaps even the emperor himself (in an Imperial campaign). If he can reach his benefactor, the character can ask *one* favor. This doesn't have to be right away. The favor he asks should be commensurate with the PC's social status (e.g., a common plebeian could ask for charges in a court case to be dropped, for a slave to be freed, for a loan of up to ten times his current wealth, or for a posting in the Imperial civil service, but he couldn't expect to be given command of a legion). Of course, a clever favor might also be "let me serve you on an important mission" which—if the character does a good job—can lead to more favors. . . .

**Felix:** This means "happy in fortune." Early in the PC's life, an omen (DM or player decides its nature) convinced the character that the goddess Fortuna was smiling on him—and so far his life has shown him to be right! The character has a strong superstitious belief in omens and luck. This should be roleplayed, perhaps with the character often consulting soothsayers or astrologers. He also gets +1 to all die





rolls he makes with a single type of dice (the player chooses the type). However, cast omens (see the "Magic and Religion" chapter) have double the normal effect, positive or negative, on the character.

**Handsome:** The character is very physically attractive. If his rolled Charisma is less than 12, raise it to 12. However, beauty is a mixed blessing. Romans believed someone with stunning good looks, of either sex, was often deficient in mental or moral character. Due to this stereotype, the character benefits from a +2 reaction bonus in social situations, such as parties or love affairs, but he suffers a -1 reaction penalty in serious negotiations. The character will also fetch a good price if ever enslaved! Being handsome is a good way to get involved in an illicit romances, but it has little to do with the character's luck in marriage. Fathers preferred to see their children marry wealth or status rather than beauty. The character may get the nickname "pulcher" (beautiful) tacked onto his last name.

**Family Scandal:** The character's parent, grandparent, or elder brother did something scandalous. Perhaps he freed one of his slaves and married her, or was accused of treason against Rome or cowardice in battle. This has tainted the family name—the PC gets a -2 reaction penalty from people who know about the scandal. If the character is a common plebeian, only his neighbors and immediate acquaintances know the tale, but if he achieves fame, the story might spread. If he is of equestrian or higher birthright, practically everyone in Rome knows the story!

If the scandal is a social one, such as a slave or madman in the family tree, the character can't do much about it except try to live it down. But if it was treason or cowardice, perhaps the true facts are very different—maybe his parent was unjustly accused or framed by jealous rivals! The DM should work out what really happened and arrange an adventure in which the PC can discover the truth and try to clear his family's name.

**Ugly:** The character is noticeably ill-favored. This isn't such a bad thing in Roman society—while appearance counted, money, character, intelligence, and wealth were more important! However, the character receives a -2 reaction penalty in parties and romantic situations. An ugly character will often have a nickname like Brocchus ("buck toothed"), Flaccus ("big ears"), Silanus ("ugly-faced"), Verrucosus ("warty"), or Varro ("bandy-legged").

**Arranged Marriage:** The character had a marriage arranged for him by his father. If the DM decides the

PC's father is still alive, this just happened; the PC may not even have met the woman! He is engaged to marry her in 1d8 months. If the PC's father is dead, then the PC is already married.

The DM should generate the wife or fiancée as an NPC, determine details of her family, and roll her reaction to the character. This may be negative—many marriages were arranged by parents against their children's wishes. Roman women married young—roll 1d10+13 for her age.

A wife comes with a dowry. Assume this is equal to  $(2d6+3) \times 10\%$  of the PC's own wealth (including both starting wealth, inheritance or expected inheritance, if any). This dowry is under the husband's control, but must be returned to the wife if the PC divorces her.

## Character Classes

Each player should decide his character's class after rolling birthright. In order to preserve the flavor of ancient Rome, some character classes are not suitable for use, while others require modification to adapt them to the Roman world-view. The following chart lists which character classes are applicable to Roman characters, and which are not:

**Table 2: Allowed Character Classes**

Class	Applicability
Fighter	A
Paladin	DM
Ranger	NA
Mage	NA
Specialist Mage	DM*
Psionicist	NA
Cleric	A
Druid	DM*
Thief	A
Bard	NA

A = Available

NA = Not available

DM = Available only with DM approval

\*Radically changed from *Player's Handbook*

## Warrior Characters

Warriors should be the most common character class in a Roman campaign. Roman warriors may be serving with the legions, (either as a soldier or officer, or possibly a barbarian auxiliary soldier), be free-





lance mercenaries, be members of the notorious Roman street gangs, or have fought as a gladiator in the arena.

Most warriors are fighters: the other subclasses are rare in a Roman setting.

## Fighters

This class adapts easily to the Roman setting. The one change that needs to be made is in the followers rules. Unlike feudal warrior-knights, Rome's military aristocracy did not create strongholds or build castles. However, any fighter who reaches 9th level has enough prestige to rapidly recruit soldiers. In fact, Roman generals often campaigned with a praetorian bodyguard of elite fighters personally loyal to them.

**Table 3: Follower Leader**

D100 Roll	Leader
01-20	4th-level fighter, trained and equipped as Roman military tribune
21-60	5th-level fighter, trained and equipped as Roman centurion
61-75	6th-level fighter, trained and equipped as Roman centurion
76-90	4th-level fighter, trained and equipped as officer of barbarian auxiliary cavalry
91-00	7th-level fighter, trained and equipped as gladiator

**Table 4: Soldier Followers**

Die Roll	Troop
01-40	80 1st-level fighters equipped as Roman legionary infantry.
41-60	40 2nd-level fighters equipped as Roman legionary infantry.
61-75	30 2nd-level fighters equipped as Roman legionary infantry and 60 0-level fighters equipped as barbarian auxiliary infantry.
76-00	40 1st-level fighters equipped as Roman legionary infantry and 20 1st-level fighters equipped as barbarian auxiliary cavalry.

For descriptions of the training and equipment of legionary and auxiliary forces, see the "Armies and Enemies of Rome" chapter. The DM should deter-

mine which type of auxiliaries are available, basing his choice on the region the character is in when his troops are recruited.

Roman fighters were expert at rapidly recruiting and training troops. As long as the character can pay and equip his men, an additional roll on the leader and troops/followers table is allowed every month the character spends looking for recruits. The DM may adjust the type of troops depending on the area the character is in, e.g., troops armed as Romans are not found in Parthia!

**Table 5: Elite Followers**

Die Roll	Elite Unit
01-60	20 3rd-level fighters equipped as legionary infantry
61-75	10 2nd-level fighters equipped as Roman or barbarian auxiliary cavalry
76-00	15 3rd-level fighters equipped as gladiators.

The optional proficiency and kit rules should be used when creating Roman fighters. Some typical fighter kits are described in the following paragraphs. Note that some kits have social restrictions based on the PC's birthright or lack thereof.

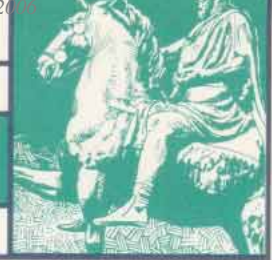
## Roman Legionary Kit

The character has joined a Roman legion and received the best military training in the ancient world. A 1st-level fighter may be either an experienced legionary or a promising recruit. He is not senior enough to be a centurion (most centurions are at least 3rd level), but he may be of any non-commissioned officer (*principales*) rank. The DM and player should decide whether or not the PC is still in the army. In a campaign set in the Imperial era times, the DM may allow the PC to serve in one of Rome's special urban units (the urban cohorts, vigiles, or praetorian guard) rather than in a normal legion.

**Role:** An entire campaign may focus on the exploits of Roman soldiers. A legionary who distinguishes himself can hope to be promoted through the ranks up to centurion, and perhaps someday reach the exalted position of *primus pilus*, the senior centurion and legion's second-in-command. A legionary retired after 20 years: he might then be recruited by merchants, *publicani* (freelance tax-collectors) and politicians for use as a bodyguard or enforcer.

**Social Restrictions:** The character cannot be of the equestrian or senatorial orders. He must be a free





citizen of the Empire or Republic.

**Secondary Skills:** Military training (march in step, obey battle orders, make careful camp, care for equipment).

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Gladius (short sword) and pilum are required for legionary infantry. For cavalry troopers, spatha (long sword) and hasta (spear) are required. Some soldiers may also have the artillery proficiency.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Required—None. Recommended: Endurance, Jumping, Running. Cavalry soldiers must have Riding (land-based) and should choose Animal Training (horses) instead of Jumping or Running. Roman soldiers sometimes served as marines on board ships—a marine may have Swimming or Seamanship.

**Special Benefits:** The character receives legionary pay (typically 225 denarii a year), and a small plot of land on retirement. See the “Armies and Enemies of Rome” chapter for more on pay and grants.

**Special Hindrances:** In the late Republic and during the Empire, Roman soldiers were careerists, serving for a term of about 20 years. A young man is on duty and subject to his superior’s orders. An ex-legionary is usually 37-40 years old. To be a younger ex-legionary, the PC must be either a deserter (and wanted by the law) or survivor of a destroyed or disbanded legion (this was fairly common for legions on the losing side of a civil war, but rare otherwise). A survivor of a destroyed or disbanded legion may suffer a –2 reaction penalty from other legionaries, since his legion disgraced itself.

**Starting Wealth:** 4d4 × 250 denarii. However, the character will usually be required to pay for his uniform and military equipment: see the “Armies and Enemies of Rome” chapter for standard equipment by period.

## Military Tribune

The character is a Roman of equestrian or senatorial rank who has been elected or appointed to a legion as a senior staff officer. He may also be a former military tribune now in civilian life.

**Role:** This type of character works best in a military campaign (although a military tribune assigned to the urban cohorts or praetorian guard can be heavily involved in a street-level, political, or gladiatorial campaign). A 1st-level fighter will probably be the junior-most military tribune in the legion, and thus the most expendable senior officer! As such, he can expect to be sent on a variety of special missions

rather than given command of troops in the field (that’s left to the experienced centurions). For instance, he might assist in pre-battle planning, lead a spy mission into an enemy camp, command a small patrol of auxiliary barbarian cavalry, or be sent as a courier for urgent messages.

**Social Restrictions:** The character must have rolled either the equestrian rank/family, senatorial rank/family, or impoverished patrician birthright.

**Secondary Skills:** Groom (care for horse and equipment).

**Required Weapon Proficiency:** Gladius (short sword) or spatha (long sword). Pila or hasta (spear) are recommended.

**Nonweapon Proficiency:** Required—Riding (Land-based), Reading/Writing. Recommended—Animal Training (horses), Engineering, Endurance, Etiquette, Military Science, Modern Language (Greek), Rhetoric, Running.

**Special Benefits:** +1 reaction bonus from other Romans, ability to command ordinary legionaries.

**Special Hindrances:** The character is under the command of his senior officers. However, military tribunes sometimes served for only a few years (sometimes without seeing much action), so an ex-tribune in his 20s can be a 1st-level PC. If not campaigning in the wilds, the character must spend enough money to maintain at least a middle-class lifestyle (1,250 denarii per level per month). If he does not, he loses his +1 reaction bonus and instead suffers a –1 reaction penalty and scorn from all Romans of equestrian or higher rank. Regaining the bonus requires extravagant expenditure (ten times the cost of a month’s living).

**Starting Wealth:** The character has either an inheritance or allowance from his birthright. In addition, he has 4d4 × 250 denarii, some of which he should use to purchase his toga, uniform arms and armor (see the “Armies and Enemies of Rome” chapter for details).

## Roman Politician

The character has been trained since childhood in the arts of public speaking and leadership. As is expected of someone of his social status, he has decided to pursue a career in law and politics, although he has also received some military training and may well end up leading troops as part of his political duties.

DMs should be aware that in Rome, many politicians were young adults; even a young 1st-level





character can expect to be given substantial responsibility.

**Role:** A 1st-level character with this kit is usually 20-29 years old and just about to embark on his public career.

One good role for a new character is the “crusading advocate” in which the character attempts to win fame in the law courts by bringing corrupt officials to justice or by representing populist causes. Naturally, this can lead to intrigue and adventure as the PC tries to uncover evidence while avoiding attempts on his life.

Or the character may (with his family’s help) seek to win election as a political aide (*quaestor*) to a provincial governor. After the election (an adventure in itself!) the young PC may soon find himself up to his neck in a war, rebellion or diplomatic incident on a troubled frontier.

**Social Restrictions:** The character must have rolled either the equestrian rank/family, senatorial rank/family, or impoverished patrician birthright.

**Required Weapon Proficiency:** Gladius (short sword). Dagger or other legionary weapons are recommended.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Required—Etiquette; Politics; Reading/Writing (Latin); Language, Modern (Greek). Recommended—Engineering, Local History (double-slot), Military Science, Riding (Land-based), Religion (double-slot).

**Special Benefits:** The character’s birth is high enough that he can easily gain meetings with senators and other Roman magistrates. He gains a +2 reaction bonus from other Romans. If his star appears to be on the rise, people will wish to attach themselves to him as clients.

**Special Hindrances:** A Roman politician is expected to serve the state without pay. He must maintain himself in style without soiling his hands with crass commercial ventures. The character must spend enough money to live with a wealthy lifestyle before putting money toward any other expenses: 5,000 denarii per level per month. If he lacks the money, he should approach a money lender and borrow money to meet these conditions! Failure to maintain a wealthy lifestyle means he loses his +2 reaction bonus, and he suffers a –3 reaction penalty when dealing with Romans of equestrian or higher rank. Regaining the bonus requires spending 50,000 denarii in a single month on parties, fine clothing, and other conspicuous forms of consumption.

**Starting Wealth:** The character’s birthright gives him an inheritance or allowance. In addition, he

received 5d4 × 50 denarii to purchase equipment and clothing. The PC should purchase a toga.

## Gladiator

A gladiator fights matches in the arena to satisfy the bloodlust of the crowd. Almost all gladiators were slaves, but trusted fighters were allowed to leave their quarters when not training. Gladiators often took jobs as part-time bodyguards, political stormtroopers, rent-collectors, criminal enforcers, or street fighters, sometimes earning enough money to buy their freedom! Because of their combat training, gladiators were prominent in slave revolts, most notably the Third Servile War led by Spartacus.

**Role:** If most of the PCs are gladiators, a campaign can be based their exploits, either in and out of the arena, or as leaders of a slave revolt. In any campaign based in Rome or a large city, gladiators may leave their barracks for occasional adventure with free PCs. However, gladiators have no place in a campaign centered around the legions. Some gladiators did win their freedom; with years of fighting behind them, ex-gladiators have no trouble finding jobs as mercenaries or weapons instructors.

**Social Restrictions:** Gladiators may not be characters with senatorial, equestrian, or impoverished patrician birthright (except possibly during the reign of a mad emperor, such as Caligula).

**Secondary Skill:** If secondary skills are used, roll randomly or choose to determine what the character did before being enslaved.

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Gladiators were trained to fight in a specific style. The player should pick appropriate proficiencies for one of these styles:

The **Mirmillo**, **Thracian**, and **Samnite** styles all used the gladius (short sword) or spatha (long sword). They also wore special gladiator armor (see the “Equipment and Treasure” chapter) and carried shields.

The **Retiarius** used the trident, net, and dagger, and wore special light gladiator armor.

The **Dimachaeri** carried two spatha (long swords) and wore heavy armor.

The **Essedari** fought with javelins from chariots.

The **Eques** fought with spatha and hasta (spear) from horseback.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Required—Tumbling (for combat showmanship). (Eques also require Riding, Land-based; Essedari require Charioteering). Recommended: Blind-fighting, Endurance, Gaming, Healing (double-slot).





**Special Benefits:** Due to the intensive combat training they receive, gladiators get a free weapon specialization. This doesn't use up any of their four proficiency slots. A gladiator's specialization must be in one of the weapons his class uses (e.g., a Retiarius may choose either trident, net, or dagger). DMs should not let players abuse this—in a good campaign, the extra specialization is compensated for by the loss of freedom that goes with being a gladiator.

**Special Hindrance:** Gladiators are required to fight in deadly combat in the arena—a serious fight takes place every month or two. (Even free gladiators are required to fight as part of their contracts.) Gladiators (and ex-gladiators) are public figures and are recognized by gladiatorial fans (much of the public) wherever they go. This can be annoying if the party is trying avoid attracting attention to themselves!

Gladiators were in demand in Roman society. Landlords and criminals (who sometimes also owned the gladiator schools) liked to recruit them as muscle, women tried to arrange affairs with them, politicians liked to recruit them to break up rival organizations, and so on. Refusing such a request could be bad for the gladiator's health. And, while much in demand, gladiators were socially despised as doomed, debased by Fortune, and without dignity! No matter how famous he might be in the arena, a gladiator will find it almost impossible to rise beyond his class.

**Starting Wealth:** 3d6 × 100 denarii. The character may have weapons and armor provided for use in the arena, but he has to buy his own personal equipment.

## Charioteer

Chariot racing was the major spectator sport in Rome. Charioteers were usually teenagers or young men, normally slaves or foreigners.

**Role:** Much like a gladiator, a charioteer risks death in the circus. Charioteers often raced several times a month and so had less free time than gladiators.

**Social Restrictions:** This class is not allowed if character rolled equestrian, senatorial, or impoverished patrician birthright.

**Required Weapon Proficiencies:** Dagger, whip.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Required—Charioteering. Recommended—Animal Training, Gaming, Riding (land-based).

**Special Benefits:** The character can win prize money

racings. The character belongs to one of the racing factions (Reds, Whites, Blues, or Greens) and receives a +2 reaction from circus fans who support his faction (see below).

**Special Hindrances:** The character is under contract to a racing faction, and he must regularly race in the circus, which is very dangerous. He is public figure—when out in public, he is besieged by fanatical fans (some of whom might be hostile, if they support a rival faction). Like gladiators, a charioteer, despite his fame, is of lowly social status and cannot hope to rise above it.

**Starting Wealth:** 3d6 × 100 denarii. Chariots and teams are provided by the faction, but the PC normally buys his own whip and dagger.

## Street Fighter

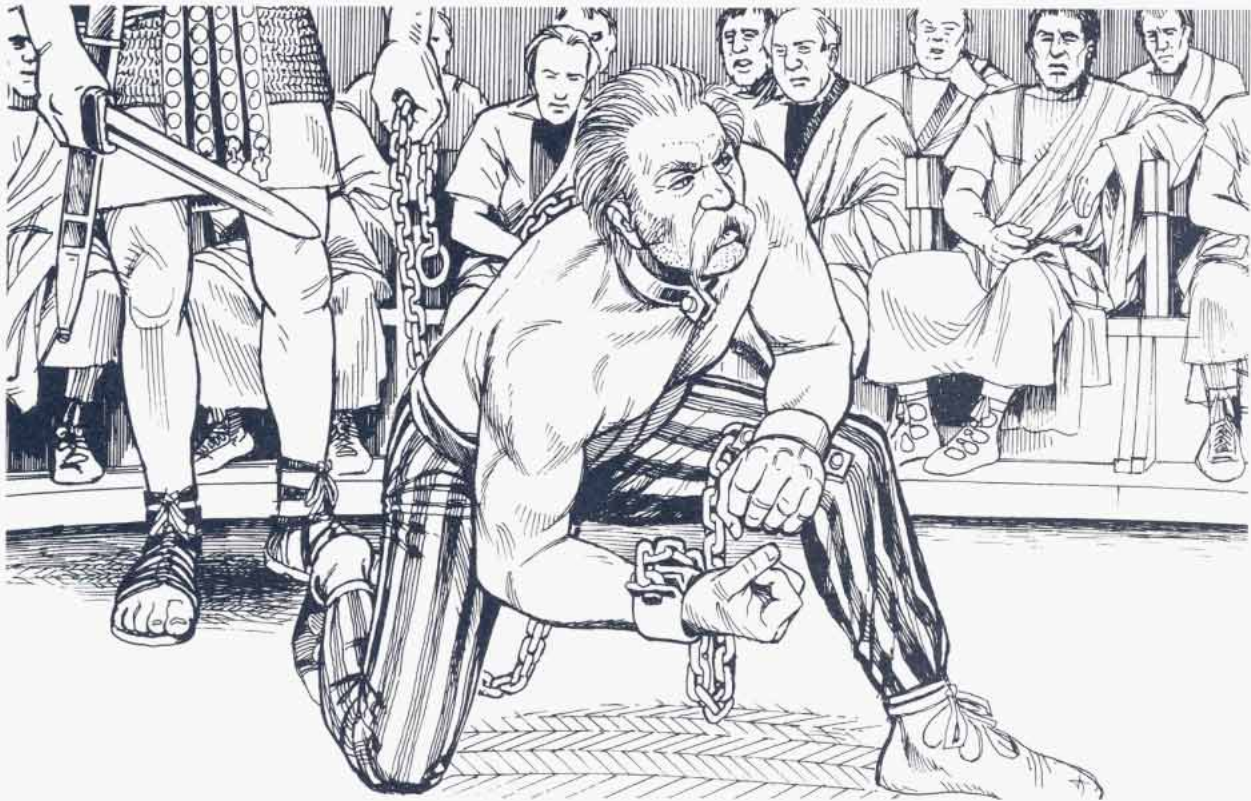
Gangs of thugs roamed the streets of Rome and most large provincial cities. Some were ex-gladiators or legionaries, but most were simply tough, working-class "proles" who grew up in areas like the Subura, Rome's notorious slum district. Like modern gang members, they fought bitter battles over turf and extorted protection money from local businesses. During the Republican period, they were often hired by magistrates (especially Tribunes of the People) to break up rival political meetings or act as bodyguards. Similar toughs were hired in the provinces by the publicani, Rome's rapacious tax farmers, who needed to use mercenaries to force people to pay the excessive taxes they demanded. DMs may use a variant of this kit for brigands, mercenaries, pirates, and the like, all of whom did exist in Rome.

**Role:** Most street fighters are tough and nasty, but the PCs may be a better class of street muscle with a personal code of honor. A street fighter could also be a private investigator-type character. Since Rome lacked an effective police and legal system, there was little the authorities or individuals could do to catch criminals. Hiring a personal enforcer was often the only way to achieve justice!

In a politically oriented campaign, a skilled street fighter could be hired by a senator or civil servant and placed in charge of urban dirty tricks. In a legionary campaign, he's likely a recent recruit who joined up to escape enemies or get out of the slums. In a gladiatorial campaign, he may have been caught committing a crime and sentenced to the arena!

**Social Restrictions:** The character may not be of equestrian or senatorial rank.





**Weapon Proficiencies:** Club, dagger, cestus (spiked glove), and gladius (short sword) are recommended—clubs are useful for subduing foes without being charged with murder.

**Secondary Skills:** Rolled randomly.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Required—None. Recommended—Disguise, Gaming, Local History (Rome), Forgery (double cost), Appraising (double cost). Pirates will have Seamanship and Swimming.

**Special Benefits:** +3 reaction bonus from people in his own local neighborhood (due to fear and respect). The character knows his city like the back of his hand, gaining the equivalent of the Direction Sense proficiency within its walls. This is very useful when moving at night through the maze-like back alleys of Rome! If in his home city, once per week the PC can call up  $1d3 \times$  his level gang members from his neighborhood (normal men armed with clubs and knives) to help him out. However, these men are not fanatics or soldiers. They won't leave the city, and though they will fight, they won't do so against overwhelming odds. Lost or dead gang members are replaced at a rate of one per month.

**Special Hindrances:** -2 reaction penalty from people

of equestrian or senatorial social rank.

**Starting Wealth:**  $5d4 \times 100$  denarii. Any low-born person this rich is almost certainly engaged in illegal or covert activities!

## Paladins

Although Romans believed in piety and honor, the concept of a fervently religious warrior having special powers and abilities was alien to the Romans until late in their history.

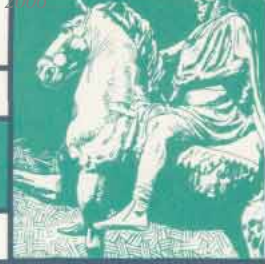
Christian paladins do not appear until the Middle Ages, well after the fall of the Roman Empire. However, beginning in the second century A.D., especially devout warriors who worship the soldier-god Mithras may count as paladins.

A paladin of Mithras has all normal paladin restrictions and abilities, except that his warhorse is a light or medium warhorse.

Recommended proficiencies are gladius (short sword), spatha (long sword), and spear (hasta).

A paladin of Mithras has to pass tests to advance in level, just like a priest of Mithras (see below).





## Ranger

The ranger, with his mix of magical powers and woods lore, is not a Roman archetype. Military scouts and the like can be created by simply taking the Legionary kit and adding Tracking or Hunting proficiencies. If the DM has the *Celts* sourcebook, he may permit some PCs to play Celtic rangers who served as auxiliary scouts with a legion.

## Wizard Characters

In order to preserve the flavor of the Roman setting, the flashy fireballs and lightning bolts of a typical AD&D® game campaign should be toned down in favor of more subtle approach to spellcasting. The DM should decide whether real magic exists in the campaign. If it does not, people claiming to use magic are just clever charlatans, although likely skilled in astrology, herbs, or stage magic. If magic *does* work, wizard character types are possible, subject to certain restrictions to levels and spell type. The "Magic and Religion" chapter offers a list of approved spells for historical wizards.

If using the optional proficiency and character kit rules, Roman wizards should conform to one of the two kits described below:

### The Roman Witch

Most powerful spellcasters in Roman folktales were women. The traditional Roman stereotype of a mage resembles one of Shakespeare's witches: she is a secretive and sinister (although not necessarily old or evil) wise woman who performs rituals and concocts magical potions and amulets. Her many powers include love spells, warding off evil, cursing enemies, healing the sick, changing herself and others into animals, and contacting the dead. Roman witches were believed to have the evil eye—a belief that persists in much of Italy to this day.

**Role:** Roman witches were believed to spend a lot of time prowling ancient tombs and forest groves in search of exotic spell ingredients. People often sought out witches to purchase spells or amulets from them. Witches were treated with disdainful skepticism by some upper-class Romans, but many were superstitious enough to consult with them.

**Social Restrictions:** Witches come from all social classes, but the character must be female. Witches from equestrian or senatorial families usually keep

their powers secret. (For male wizards, see the Philosopher-Mage kit later.)

**Preferred Schools:** The character is a specialist mage in lesser divination, as well as either necromancy or alteration.

**Secondary Skills:** None.

**Weapon Proficiency:** Dagger.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Required—Herbalist, Spellcraft. Recommended—(General) Artistic Ability, Brewing, Cooking, Weather Sense; (Wizard) Ancient History, Astrology, Religion; (Priest, double slot) Healing.

**Special Benefits:** Roman witches who achieve 3rd level have the power of the *evil eye*. The witch can use the evil eye once per day for every three levels she has attained. Each use allows her to cast a version of the 6th-level *eyebite* spell, which can only produce either *fear* or *sicken* effects, and whose area of effect is limited to a single victim.

At 7th level, a Roman witch gains an additional power. Witches who specialize in necromancy may cast the clerical *speak with dead* spell once per day. Those who specialize in alteration may shapechange as a druid (*Player's Handbook*, page 37) twice per day, once each into a normal mammal and a bird.

**Special Hindrances:** Roman witches progress as specialist wizards, but they pay double experience point cost to progress beyond the 9th level. No evocation spells may be learned. Most Romans are nervous around a known witch: -2 reaction penalty! A witch may have no knots upon her person when she works magic. If she does, her magic will unravel, preventing her from casting any spells and cancelling those spells with a duration that she has already cast. This prevents the witch from wearing sandals or embroidered clothing (a simple robe is fine) when casting spells.

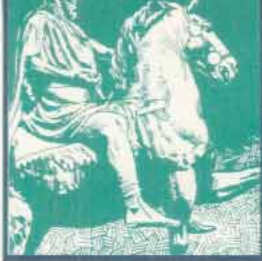
**Starting Wealth:** 1d4+1 × 100 denarii.

### Philosopher-Mage Kit

This character is a wandering philosopher who has chosen to adventure in order to learn more about the world. He may have decided to devote his life to the study of the arcane arts, or magic may simply be one of several forms of knowledge he has picked up in his studies. The PC may be a Roman citizen, but he is often a Romanized Greek, Egyptian, Persian, or other foreigner from a culture known for its learning. Due to his profession, the character receives respect regardless of his race.

**Role:** Philosophers consider themselves to be part





of the natural aristocracy, above such concerns as working for a living. High society agrees; although they might be poor, philosophers are admitted to the houses of the rich and powerful and live on the charity of upper-class patrons. Sometimes they earn a living as tutors or astrologers, but they prefer to spend their time in learned conversation, debate, or research, or traveling the world in order to better understand its mysteries.

**Social Restrictions:** Philosopher-mages should be male.

**Preferred Schools:** Abjuration, Greater Divination.

**Secondary Skills:** None.

**Weapon Proficiency:** Staff.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Required—Ancient History, Reading/Writing (Greek, Latin, other native language, if any). Recommended—(Wizard): Astrology, Engineering, Languages (Ancient), Religion, Spellcraft; (General) Rhetoric; (Priest Slot, double cost) Healing.

**Special Benefits:** The character may interpret omens once per week (see “Magic and Religion” chapter). On any friendly reaction roll result in a social situation, an equestrian or senatorial household is willing to take the character in as the family’s “resident philosopher.” If the PC asks and is accepted as such, his duty is to attend dinner parties (at least once every third day) and provide stimulating intellectual conversation. In return, he can expect free room and board at a middle-class lifestyle and a small stipend (100 denarii × his level per month) for use in purchasing books or research materials. The character must also choose a school of philosophy, such as Stoic, Epicurean, Aristotelian, Socratic, or Pythagorean philosophy. He receives a +2 reaction bonus from fellow philosophers of the same school (see below).

**Special Hindrances:** The character must be a specialist wizard in either abjuration or greater divination. He pays double experience to progress beyond 7th level and no evocation spells may be learned. The character receives a –2 reaction penalty from philosophers of rival schools. Finally, wandering philosophers were notorious for their untidy garb, lack of fashion sense, lack of common sense, and poor physical hygiene. A known philosopher has a –2 reaction penalty in non-intellectual circles.

**Starting Wealth:** 1d4+1 × 100 denarii.

## Rogue Characters

The standard thief class is wholly appropriate to the Roman setting—in fact, Rome itself is one of the

few ancient cities both large and rich enough to support numbers of professional thieves.

Thieves may have any birthright, but very few characters of equestrian rank or higher are thieves.

Although Roman criminal law was harsh, Roman police procedures varied from nonexistent (in the Republic) to slack (in the Empire), so unless a thief is caught in the act of stealing or tracked down by private investigators, he has little to fear!

Besides stealing, the run-of-the-mill thief often becomes involved in highway robbery or running protection rackets, victimizing small businesses. This is safer but less lucrative than robbing rich senators and equestrians, although PCs may be bolder. In the turbulent politics of late Republican Rome and some Imperial periods, a thief is often able to supplement his income by working for public figures as a professional spy or assassin.

If the campaign is set within Rome itself, a thief is most likely to live in the notorious Subura slum district. He might be a freelancer, but in a large city he would probably belong to a *collegia* (club) of fellow thieves, similar but less formalized than the thieves’ guilds of generic fantasy. Thieves’ clubs are probably located in crossroads inns or city taverns, which had deserved reputations as hives of scum and villainy. For more on them, see the “Roman Society” chapter.

Since there are no demi-humans in a historical Roman setting, a new followers table must be used for rogues:

**Table 6: Rogue’s Followers**

D100 Roll	Follower	Level
01-10	Charlatan-thief	1-6
11-70	Thief	1-8
71-00	Fighter	1-6

Fighters should be designed using the Street Fighter kit. For charlatan thieves, see below.

Most followers are from the region the character is living in, but some may be from distant lands.

The rarity of magic in historical Roman campaigns lends itself to a special type of thief: the charlatan. This is a con-man who poses as a real magician to fleece the gullible. Charlatan-thieves may be used in any campaign in which the optional proficiency rules are used.

## Charlatan-Thief Kit

A charlatan is a clever rogue who uses charisma and stage magic to impress the gullible into believ-





ing he has magical powers. Most “magicians” in a historical Roman setting are charlatans. Charlatans pretend to be able to foretell the future, predict and control weather, cast charms, blessings and curses, or speak with the dead in order to bilk or intimidate the gullible. By convincing upper-class Romans that he has magical powers, a charlatan-thief can gain access to wealthy households or the patronage of wealthy equestrians and powerful senators.

**Role:** Some charlatans are Roman, but many are foreigners, often Egyptians or Greeks, capitalizing on their homeland’s reputation for arcane wisdom. A charlatan may become part of an adventuring group either because they believe he is a wizard or (more likely) because they value his talents as an agent or scout. Although a charlatan may not be able to magically heal the sick, he may possess useful knowledge of herbs, poisons, and healing techniques that can stand a party in good stead.

**Social Restrictions:** The character should not be of equestrian or senatorial rank.

**Weapon Proficiencies:** The PC must choose from among dart, dagger, gladius, and staff.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Required—Astrology, Spellcraft. Recommended—Disguise, Healing, Herbalist, Juggling, Languages (Ancient and Modern), Reading Lips, Religion, Ropecraft, Singing, Weather Sense.

**Special Benefits:** A charlatan’s intimate familiarity with magic gives him a greater ability to read magical scrolls than a normal thief. He has only a 20% chance of reading the scroll incorrectly and reversing the intended effect.

All charlatans are accomplished showmen and performers who can stage “magical” effects that, although false, appear very realistic to onlookers.

The DM should decide what kind of spells can be faked—usually it is limited to things that can be performed by stage magic, such as magical healing, talking to spirits, and conjuring items out of thin air. Doing so requires a proper setting and props and (usually) one or more accomplices. The charlatan must make a successful Spellcraft proficiency check. If the roll succeeds, anyone whose Wisdom is equal or less than what the player rolls believes that he has seen a real feat of magic. For instance, if the PC needs a 16 or less to succeed and rolls a 12, anyone with Wisdom 12 or less is fooled. However, people who strongly believe in magic (e.g., barbarians) should be treated as having half their normal Wisdom! Individuals who are fooled are likely to believe the charlatan is a real wizard, which could be good or bad. Anyone

who isn’t fooled reacts to the charlatan at –3.

**Special Hindrances:** The PC must place at least 30 of his 60 discretionary percentage points into pick pockets, representing his training in sleight-of-hand and conjuring tricks. Charlatans do not gain a thief’s backstab ability and have no thieves’ cant. Romans of senatorial or higher social rank react with a –2 penalty to charlatans, reflecting a general distrust of magic—this applies whether they believe him to be a fake or not. Charlatans must spend at least 200 denarii per month to buy magical props. If they fail to do so, they suffer –5 penalty to any Spellcraft rolls to deceive their audiences.

**Starting Wealth:** 2d6 × 250 denarii.

**Charlatan-Wizards:** For the player who wants to have a real wizard in a strongly historical campaign, an interesting character concept is to start out with a charlatan who has scores high enough to be a dual-class wizard-charlatan. This way sorcery does not enter the campaign immediately, allowing the DM to maintain a historical flavor. The character knows he is not a real wizard, but he has devoted his life to trying to become one. In order to become up a wizard, the character should have to follow up many false leads and have numerous adventures in foreign lands searching for a source of real magic. He may hear of powerful wizards and journey to meet them, only to discover that most are clever fakes like himself. He could visit the Library of Alexander or explore mysterious ruined temples in search of lost and forgotten books of spells—only to find them stolen or missing important pages, or in possession of powerful owners who don’t want to sell. But eventually, after following a long chain of clues, he should find a mentor or grimoire that can teach him to be a real magician. Only then should the DM allow the PC to switch classes to wizard!

## Bards

Although actors and musicians do exist, the bard character class’s unique mix of magical, rogue, and scholarly abilities has no place in Roman culture. For an actor or traveling entertainer, take a rogue with Acting, Dancing, or Musical Instrument proficiencies.

## Priest Characters

The religion of the Roman Republic and early Empire revolved around worship of a pantheon of traditional gods and spirits, many of whom were associated with the classical Greek gods.





Rome was tolerant of other religions as long as they did not disturb the peace. As Rome expanded, its citizens came into contact with foreign gods whose exotic allure attracted ready converts. Some of these became established in Rome, especially the colorful "mystery cults" and the monotheistic religions of Mithraism and Christianity.

Each deity's priests have individual requirements and abilities. They are summarized using an abbreviated version of that used in the *Legends and Lore* tome:

- AB = ability scores required; "Standard" means use *PH*
- AL = Alignment acceptable for priests of the deity
- WP = weapons allowed
- AR = armor restrictions
- SP = spheres of clerical spells to which the deity grants access; an "\*" indicates minor access only
- PW = powers commonly granted to priests by the deity at the noted level. Unless noted, granted powers can be used once per day. Granted powers that duplicate spells function at the priest's level, but do not require the priest to know or have prayed for that spell.
- TU = ability to turn or command undead.

## Priest of the State Religion

Rome's traditional gods included Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Apollo, Venus, and a host of others, many of them versions of the Greek pantheon of Olympian gods. Their traditional worship constituted Rome's state religion. The power and influence of professional priests in Rome was not as great as in many ancient societies. This was because most religious devotions were performed by individuals or families, or by elected magistrates who held priestly titles as just one part of their job.

**Role:** State religion tended to be quite formulaic; prayers and rituals were worded like legal contacts to avoid giving offense to gods. The priests of the state religion are expert advisors who help individuals and the state properly formulate these rituals. They also regularly preside over the religious ceremonies at the opening of games and festivals.

**Social Restrictions:** None (some of the highest posts could be held only by ancient patrician families, however).

**Secondary Skills:** Rolled randomly. Priests often

had a part-time job. Any priest character can also choose Butcher instead of rolling—priests were often involved in this trade, since something had to be done with all that sacrificial meat.

**Weapon Proficiencies:** None specifically required. See each deity's description for allowed weapons.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Required—Read/Write. Recommended—(General) Musical Instrument, Singing; (Priest) Ancient History, Religion.

**Special Hindrances:** The character must follow the dictates of his religion and maintain the temple and its grounds. Some high-ranking priests of Jupiter had to deal with elaborate taboos, but these make them unsuitable as adventurers.

**Starting Wealth:** 3d6 × 250 denarii.

**Requirements:** There are too many Greco-Roman deities to deal with each individually in this book—see the "Magic and Religion" chapter for brief descriptions and information on which Roman god matches which Greek one, and then refer to *Legends and Lore* for the detailed priestly requirements and details of their priestly requirements.

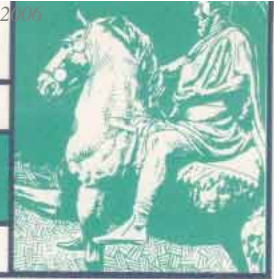
## Priest of the Mysteries Kit

The character is a priestess or priest of one of the mystery cults, so called because their elaborate rites were kept secret from the public and only gradually revealed to worshipers during successive initiation ceremonies. The mystery cults concerned themselves with the natural cycles of death and rebirth. They offered intense spiritual experiences, including frenzied dancing and singing, elaborate pageantry, and special effects, all staged with the showmanship of a rock concert. Unlike the state religion, their priests claimed magical powers, and promised worshipers both mystical enlightenment and life after death.

**Role:** A priest or priestess of the mysteries is similar to a modern-day guru or mystic. People come to her for spiritual guidance and enlightenment when traditional religion no longer offers solace. She must also protect the cult from periodic state persecution, either by operating underground or by winning converts among influential Romans. Worshipers from all social ranks come to the priest for help with their problems, some of which could lead to adventures. Moreover, because the mystery cults are very interested in magic, a priestess can also be drawn into a quest for magical items or arcane knowledge, or a struggle against evil magical forces.

**Social Restrictions:** None. However, priests of Isis must have been born in Egypt, even if they now live





in Rome. Many mystery cults have female priestesses.

**Weapon Proficiencies:** None specifically required. See each deity's description for allowed weapons.

**Secondary Skills:** None.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Required—Religion, and see individual descriptions. Recommended—(General) Dancing, Languages (Modern), Singing; (Priest) Ancient History, Astrology, Musical Instrument, Reading/Writing, Ventriloquism.

**Special Hindrances:** The priest is expected to perform ceremonies to ensure that the natural cycles continue, to lead processions through the streets during the god's festivals, and to seek worthy converts and initiate them into the mysteries. The mystery cults of Bacchus, Cybele, and Isis were periodically suppressed by the senate, and cult priestesses may receive occasional harassment from city officials (*aediles*): -2 reaction penalty from civil authorities who are not also cult members.

**Requirements:** Several different mystery cults were popular in Rome. The major ones were Isis, Cybele, Bacchus, and Ceres. Their requirements are described below, using an abbreviated version of the *Legends and Lore* format. For a more detailed description of the cults themselves, see the "Magic and Religion" chapter.

**Isis:** The Greco-Roman version of Isis was a goddess grown far beyond her Egyptian roots to become the most potent and widely worshiped deity prior to the rise of Christianity. Her priests are multi-classed wizard/priest characters. (The normal prohibition against human multi-class characters is waived, but their maximum wizard level is 9, and they must specialize in necromancy or alteration).

AB standard, plus must meet wizard requirements; AL any non-evil; WP any; AR any; SP all, astral, charm, combat, creation, divination, elemental, guardian, healing, necromantic, protection, sun; PW—magic resistance of 5% per level (1st level), never fail saving throws caused by magical attacks (10th level); TU nil. All priests should take the Spellcraft nonweapon proficiency.

**Cybele:** Next to Isis in popularity was Cybele. Also called Magna Mater, the Great Mother, she was a wild fertility goddess from Asia Minor whose frenzied rites outraged conservative Romans.

AB standard, plus male priests must be eunuchs; AL any non-lawful; WP dagger, sickle, any sword; AR any; SP all, animal, divination, guardian, healing, necromantic, plant, protection; PW—enter a frenzy in which the priest is immune to pain and fear—treat as the courage effect of the *emotion* spell (1st level),

*divination* (4th level), *animal summoning* (lions only) (7th level), *cure disease* (reversible) (10th level); TU nil. Priests must take the Dancing nonweapon proficiency.

**Ceres:** This widely worshiped goddess of the fertile earth was also called Demeter and Korre. Her priests must make an annual pilgrimage every September to her shrine in Eleusis to perform the Eleusinian mysteries to maintain the fertility of the land.

AB standard; AL any non-evil; WP sickle, club, flail; AR any non-metal; SP all, animal, divination, elemental, healing, plant, weather; PW—*plant growth* (1st level), *control weather* (10th level), *create potion of longevity* (for self only) (20th level); TU turn (5th level).

**Bacchus:** The Roman god of wine and fertility was worshiped in Bacchic revels.

AB standard; AL any but lawful good; WP poison, staff, whip, net; AR any; SP all, charm, creation, healing, plant, weather; PW—*neutralize poison* (1st level), Constitution raised to 18 (10th level); TU nil. Priests must take the Brewing proficiency; Singing and Dancing are recommended.

## Mithraic Priest Kit

Mithras was a popular Persian deity of light and truth whose worship spread rapidly through the Roman Empire in the second half of the first century A.D. He was favored by legionaries, pirates, and traveling merchants. For more on Mithras, see the "Magic and Religion" chapter.

**Role:** To recruit worthy lawful candidates from the legions and from courageous aristocratic men. Teach the secret rituals to the initiates, but no one else. Officiate at sacrifices. Struggle against evil and the forces of darkness!

**Social Restrictions:** None.

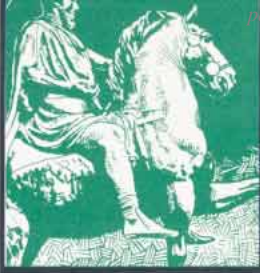
**Weapon Proficiencies:** Gladius (short sword) or spatha (long sword), hasta (spear).

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Required—Religion, Reading and Writing, Endurance (double slot). Recommended—Modern Language (Greek or Persian), Riding (land-based).

**Special Benefits:** Receive respect from other Mithraic worshippers (+3 reaction bonus).

**Special Hindrances:** Priests must undergo tests and ordeals of courage and endurance as they go up in level. This can be symbolized by requiring Constitution checks or by being role-played. Failure means you don't gain a level, instead dropping to 500 XP





below what you need to reach it. The different grades of Mithraic initiates had names: Raven (1), Bride (2), Soldier (3), Lion or She-Lion (4), Persian (5), Courier of the Sun (6), and Father (7th and up). PC priests are assumed to have reached the 3rd grade (Soldier). Each further grade must be matched by an increase in level.

*Starting Wealth:* 3d6 × 250 denarii.

*Requirements:* AB Str 12+, Wis 12+, Con 13+; must have Con and Wis 16+ to gain 10% bonus; AL lawful good or lawful neutral; WP any, but no use of poison; AR any; SP all, astral, combat\*, divination\*, elemental\*, guardian, healing\*, necromantic, protection, sun. *Reincarnate* is prohibited. Reversible versions of necromantic spells may not be used; PW—*continual light* (3rd level), *detect evil* as paladin (5th level), *aura of protection from evil* as paladin (7th level); TU turn.

## The Christian Cleric

During the late 1st century A.D., the Christian church was influenced by the apostle Paul to shift its missionary focus from the Jewish people to the larger Roman Empire. The aggressive missionary activity of the priests took them into the far corners of the Empire. This, coupled with their courage in times of persecution, led an increasing number of Roman citizens to become Christians.

*Role:* Defend and promote the Christian faith by preaching the teaching of the apostles. Use priestly spells only in emergencies, but actively seek and baptize converts. Be steadfast in faith even if it means martyrdom. Preach against pagan and heretical practices and discourage superstition and the practice of magic. Do good works among the poor and sick. Avoid violence and abstain from military service (until the Empire becomes officially Christian).

*Social Restrictions:* Romans from any walk of life may be Christian priests. In the 1st century A.D., most priests hail from the regions of Palestine or Syria; later, priests may be from anywhere.

*Secondary Skills:* Rolled randomly. However, Scribe may be chosen instead of taking a random roll.

*Weapon Proficiency:* None required. See below for restrictions.

*Nonweapon Proficiencies:* Required—Religion. Recommended: Disguise, Healing, Modern Languages (Greek), Rhetoric, Singing.

*Special Benefits:* Receive respect from Christians (+3 reaction bonus). Most Christian priests are paci-

fists; they use weapon proficiency slots as non-weapon slots, giving them extra abilities.

*Special Hindrances:* Christian priests of this period must be celibate and chaste. They are absolutely forbidden to kill or order another's death. Until the 3rd century A.D., there was widespread prejudice against Christians. Priests must often hold services in secret and take a -3 reaction penalty from non-Christians. All Christians are sporadically subject to arrest and possible execution. Christians can use only those magical items consecrated by the church. Sinning priests may lose their powers as a result of chaotic or evil actions, but they may keep their social position if no one else finds out. Most priests are of good or neutral alignments, but may perform "evil" acts against pagans, Jews, or rival Christian heretics in the interests of saving their souls. However, bloodshed is to be avoided!

*Starting Wealth:* 3d6 × 200 denarii.

*Requirements:* AB standard; AL any non-evil; WP staff or club; AR any; SP all, divination, healing, necromantic\*, protection, charm\*, sun\*. *Reflecting pool*, *barkskin*, and *reincarnate* are prohibited. Reversible versions of spells may not be used; PW—*soothing word* (1st level); TU turn.

## Druids

Roman characters may not be druids, but they encountered Celtic druids in Gaul. If the DM wants to introduce druids into the campaign, use the variant druid rules from the *Celts Campaign Sourcebook*. Because Celtic druids are known as fanatical tree worshipers who practice human sacrifice, a druid suffers a -4 reaction penalty from Romans. He could be expected to be put to death if the authorities discover he is a druid.

## Modified Proficiencies

All Roman characters should be designed using the optional proficiency rules. For historical reasons, some proficiency slots are modified or omitted in a Roman campaign:

*Engineering:* This is moved from the Priest category to the Warrior category. Roman soldiers were highly skilled in building field fortifications, in siegecraft, and in the construction of public works, such as roads, bridges, and aqueducts. Roman senators were often personally involved in overseeing building projects.

*Heraldry:* The complex system of medieval her-





aldry had not yet appeared, so this proficiency is unavailable.

*Languages, Modern:* Besides Latin, the most common languages a Roman would learn are Greek and Punic (spoken by Carthaginians).

*Reading/Writing:* This is available free to most Romans—see Literacy and Languages, later.

*Riding, Airborne:* This proficiency is unavailable.

*Riding, Land-based:* The lance may not be used—trying to use a couched, medieval jousting lance without stirrups would result in the rider falling off his horse from the impact. Instead, cavalry fought with spears and javelins, thrusting with them or throwing them, respectively.

## New Proficiencies

The following are available in Roman campaigns:

*Military Science:* Unlike the majority of medieval generals, the Romans favored a scientific approach to the art of war, and Roman commanders often wrote down their observations. This proficiency indicates the character has both theoretical and practical knowledge of tactics and strategy, as well as knowledge of how to train troops. The DM may allow a military commander who makes a successful skill check insights into the deployment and plans of his opponents. If using the *BATTLESYSTEM*® rules, any unit commander who has had time to work with his troops and drill a battle plan into them may roll a Military Science check prior to the battle. A successful check indicates his plan was good: add +2 to his Command Distance (CD) and +1 to his Charisma bonus for that battle only.

*Politics:* This is political and diplomatic savvy—the ability to navigate the byzantine complexities of Roman domestic and foreign politics. A character possessing this proficiency is aware of current political events (as news reaches him). He knows basic information about major political figures, including everyone serving in the senate. A successful Politics check combined with good role-playing is usually enough to secure an invitation to meet with a magistrate, senator, or other political figure. Influencing them, of course, depends on the character's—and the player's—actions. Politics is a General proficiency, counting as one slot.

*Rhetoric:* A character who has this proficiency has mastered the Greek science of public oratory. He can speak well, but more importantly, he knows the accepted rules and conventions for delivering legal and political speeches. Rhetoric was adopted by the

Romans after the Punic Wars and became an integral part of the education of upper-class Romans. Many citizens attended the law courts and political speeches not out of interest in the case or issues, but simply to hear the most skilled orators speak.

When a character makes a formal speech in Latin or Greek to an audience of educated Romans or Greeks, he may make a Rhetoric proficiency check. If successful, his delivery was excellent (regardless of the content of the speech) and the audience was at least entertained and possibly moved; the DM can give a +5 bonus on subsequent use of Law or Politics proficiencies. However, use of rhetoric does not impress barbarians or proles, nor is it appropriate for haggling with merchants over prices! If two characters with rhetoric get into a debate over an issue, the highest roll that also succeeds wins; only the winner receives a bonus.

Rhetoric is a general proficiency, counting as one slot.

## Bonus Proficiency

The language of Rome was Latin. But Greek was a common second language for educated Romans. Thanks to the conquests of Alexander the Great and his successors, Greek culture had spread throughout the ancient world. Greek-speaking traders were everywhere. Moreover, since Greek was the language of classic poetry (such as Homer) and of philosophy, the ability to speak fluent Greek was the mark of a proper upbringing for a Roman of the senatorial class. Any upper-class Roman who had no Greek would be looked upon as an uncultured boor or country bumpkin.

Characters born into equestrian or senatorial families were always literate; many commoners and slaves could puzzle out simple written sentences given time. All Roman PCs automatically receive the Reading/Writing proficiency unless they are of slave background (e.g., characters in a gladiatorial campaign).

## Female characters

Roman culture was male dominated. Roman women were in a distinctly inferior position, kept that way by both law and custom. Adventuring women are unlikely—it was a rare Roman who even took his wife with him when he traveled!

*Wizards:* Limited to the Roman Witch kit.

*Priests:* Priestesses of the mystery cults are recom-





mended; some state cults (e.g., Diana and Minerva) had priestesses. Female priests of Mithras and Christianity may exist, although they cannot obtain official rank in the male-dominated hierarchy.

**Fighters:** Limited to the Gladiator and Street Fighter kits; female barbarian fighters may also exist—see the *Celts* book.

**Rogues:** No restrictions. A rogue can simulate either a street thief or an adventuring aristocrat who succeeds by guile and charm.

**Female Birthright:** A roll on the birthright table needs some modification for women.

A roll of “senatorial rank” or “equestrian rank” means the PC was born into that rank and is married to someone of her own class. If another PC is appropriate, she could be married to him. Otherwise design her husband as an NPC. The character has a dowry (partially under her own control) equal to  $2d6+3 \times 10\%$  of her husband’s wealth. The husband may or may not approve of her adventuring; perhaps he is a soldier on campaign in a foreign land, and he is totally unaware of it!

A roll of “senatorial family” or “equestrian family” means the PC is an unmarried woman in such a family. The DM may assume her paterfamilias is indulgent or senile enough to give his spirited daughter some freedom to adventure, as long as she doesn’t bring any scandal to the family’s name. Or maybe she sneaks out in secret!

A roll of “impoverished patrician” or “arranged marriage” is instead taken to mean the PC’s husband has died, leaving her a rich widow while she is still youthful. Treat as “impoverished aristocrat” for her wealth and status, and assume she has no close male relatives to take control of her wealth.

A roll of “military family” gives no benefits, although a father in the legions might have encouraged the character to pursue a non-traditional career.

A roll of “ugly” or “beautiful” gives double reaction modifiers, since Romans (like other cultures) judge women by surface appearance to a greater degree than they do men.

Other results are unchanged.

Whether or not a female character has children should be up to the PC, not the DM. However, even young children need not interfere with an adventuring career, if the character has slaves or a nurse to care for them.

## Roman Names

Roman characters should be given Roman names. Traditional aristocratic Roman male names had three parts. In order, they were the praenomen, the nomen, and the cognomen. (For examples of Roman names, see the list below.)

**The Praenomen:** A man’s given name, used informally. Only about 20 first names existed during the Republic, although this expanded in the Empire as more non-Romans became citizens. Particular aristocratic families often favored two or three traditional praenomens and always chose their sons’ names from them. Lower-class Roman males usually didn’t have a praenomen and sometimes lacked a cognomen as well.

**The Nomen:** The name of the clan or gens, which comprised all family members who traced their lineage back to a common ancestor. It served as the middle name.

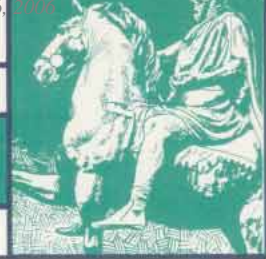
**The Cognomen:** This distinguished different family branches of the clan and served as the last name. In some families a man might have two or three cognomens. A nickname would often be tacked onto the end of the cognomen—a Scipio who distinguished himself in Africa became known as Scipio Africanus. Nicknames often evolved into cognomens over time.

Lower-class males usually had no praenomen.

Slaves might keep their own birth name, be given a new name, or use a form of their master’s nomen, changing the “-ius” suffix to the servile “-ioper.” Foreign slaves with names that were difficult for Romans to pronounce were often jokingly renamed after Greek gods or mythological figures. A freed slave adopted his or her master’s nomen, but changed the “-ius” ending to “-ianus.” So a slave in the household of Pinarius might be called Pinarioper, and if he won his freedom he would be Pinarianus.

**Female Names:** Until a woman married, her first name was the feminine form of her father’s nomen. Replace the last two letters with an “a,” so Claudius becomes Claudia, Julius becomes Julia, etc. This was followed by a second name giving the order of her birth. Maior meant oldest, secundus was the next oldest, etc. Once she married, her second name took on a feminine form of her husband’s cognomen. Julia Secundus who married Lucius Plinius Plautus became Julia Plinia.





### Praenomen (first name)

Appius	Manius	Sextus
Aulus	Marcus	Spurius
Gaius	Publius	Tiberius
Lucius	Quintus	Titus
Mamercus	Servius	

### Nomen (middle name)

Aelius	Furius	Oppius
Aemilius	Gavius	Ovidius
Annius	Granius	Papirius
Antistius	Gratidius	Papinius
Antonius	Herrenius	Petronius
Appuleius	Hortensius	Plautius
Aquillius	Julius	Plotius
Atilus	Labeienius	Pompeius
Aurelius	Licinius	Popillius
Billienus	Livius	Poppaedi
Caecillus	Lucilus	Porcius
Caelius	Lucius	Postumius
Calpurnius	Lutatius	Publius
Cassius	Macrinus	Rutilius
Claudius	Maelius	Servilius
Clodius	Magius	Siccus
Cornelius	Mamilius	Sulpiciu
Curtius	Manlius	Sullustius
Decimus	Marcus	Terrentius
Didius	Marius	Titius
Domitius	Matius	Tullius
Equitius	Memmius	Turpilius
Fabius	Minucius	Vettius
Fabricus	Nonius	
Flavius	Norbanus	
Fulvius	Octavius	

### Cognomen (last name)

Africanus	Dives	Paulus
Agelastus	Drusus	Philippus
Ahala	Eburnus	Piso
Ahenobarbus	Fimbria	Posthumus
Albinus	Flaccus	Pulcher
Augur	Galba	Ravilla
Balearicus	Getha	Reginus
Bambalio	Glaucia	Rufinus
Bestia	Gracchus	Rufus
Broccus	Laenas	Ruso
Brutus	Lentulus	Saturnius
Caecus	Lepidus	Scaevola
Caepio	Limentanus	Scaurus
Caesar	Longius	Scipio
Caestoninus	Lucullus	Serranus
Caldus	Macedonicus	Sesquiculus
Calvus	Mactator	Siculus
Camillus	Magnus	Stichus
Caprarius	Mancinus	Strabo
Carbo	Maximus	Sulla
Cato	Meminus	Tuburo
Catulus	Merula	Varro
Cicero	Metullus	Varus
Cotta	Nasica	Verracosis
Crassus	Nerva	Vopiscus
Cunctator	Numidicus	
Damaticus	Orator	
Dentatus	Orestes	



## CHAPTER

## 4

## Magic and Religion

In the time of Nero, the Roman author Lucan wrote how the necromantic sorceress Erictho was tracked down by Sextus Pompeius, son of Caesar's rival Pompey the Great, who wished to converse with a dead man's spirit. Sextus Pompeius fetches her a corpse, and Erictho goes to work. After pouring an potion down its throat composed of the froth of rabid dogs, a hyena's hump, snake skin, and other unsavory ingredients, the witch chants an outlandish incantation that mingles the barking of dogs and howling of wolves, the screech of an owl, the roaring of wild beasts and hissing of snakes, the murmur of forest trees and the bellow of thunder. She invokes chaos, the Kindly Ones [the furies], Proserpine, Hecate, and Hermes. At the end of the incantation, the ghost appears. At first it is disobedient, but when Erictho threatens it in the name of all the powers of the underworld, the spirit flows into the corpse, which stands up, pale and strained. Erictho forces it to answer the questions Pompey asks it, and then rewards it by burning it to ashes. Pompey is suitably impressed.

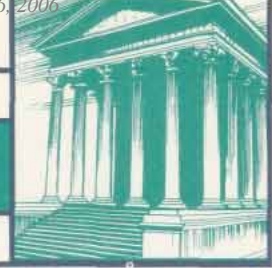
Erictho is an archetypal Roman magician. She is female, sinister, and a powerful mistress of the necromantic arts. Romans also believed in the power of

the evil eye, and village witches plied their trade, selling blessings, curses, love spells, and magic amulets. Roman popular literature contains stories of people encountering powerful witches and magicians who could transform themselves or others into animals or call up storms. Some individuals (more among the upper classes) maintained a disdainful skepticism toward magic, but they were very much among the minority. Archaeologists have found numerous tablets containing curses, charms, and cures, as well as many protective amulets.

Romans believed the mystic arts originated in the dim past in the mysterious east, perhaps in Persia, and slowly spread from there throughout the world. A Roman mage always requested the help of spirits and gods to cast his spells. The difference between wizardly and priestly magic was the relationship to the forces called upon. The priest would make his appeal to a single god, while the wizard used supernatural entities as a craftsman would a toolbox, calling upon whatever magical forces or entities could help him perform the task at hand. A typical wizard's spell might call upon "all spirits of the netherworlds." When magicians called upon named deities, Diana, Hecate, and Pluto were most popular.







Despite the widespread belief in magic, Roman sorcery should not be as powerful as in a standard AD&D® game world. Most wizards are village witches, charm-peddlers, soothsayers, healers, and wandering philosopher-mages. Although characters meet many people who claim magical powers, their powers are very low-key by the standards of typical fantasy magic—the ability to cure warts and other minor ailments, make love charms, cast minor blessings or curses, or foretell the future through omens. Many such hedge-wizards are fakes; those that are not are unlikely to be above 3rd level. By Roman standards, a 5th-level wizard is a mighty sorcerer!

Rising beyond these hedge-magicians are the powerful witches of Roman folklore, most of whom seem to be 7th- to 10th-level wizards. Female spellcasters are by far the most common. They appear as characters in several works of Roman literature dating from the late Republic and early Empire.

A powerful female wizard named Canidia is featured in some of the poems of Horace (65 B.C.—8 B.C.). Canidia and her cohorts Saganam, Veia, and Folio are black-cloaked figures with long, claw-like nails who gather strange ingredients in the dark of the night and call upon Hecate to cast spells of love and death. The poet Ovid (43 B.C.—A.D. 17) writes about his encounters with Roman witches, notably Dispas, who can change shape into an owl and control the weather, and Tacita, who casts a variety of charms and curses.

We have already mentioned Lucan's (A.D. 39-65) tale of Sextus Pompey and Erichtho, a pale, unkempt witch who slept in tombs and who animated the dead to do Pompey's bidding. During the later Empire, Apuleius (writing in the second century A.D.) describes two powerful witches: the murderous witch Mero of Thessaly, who could turn people into animals and could transport her house across hundreds of miles, and Pamphile, a mistress of necromancy, love potions, and shape-changing (especially owls), who falls in love with a youth and tries to charm him. The story's hero tries to copy Pamphile's polymorphic magic, but he ends up turning himself into a donkey.

Nor was interest in magic limited to women. Pliny records that the mad emperor Nero devoted several years of his life to the study of magic, summoning many witches and magicians to his court in a fruitless attempt to teach himself the arts of wizardry. Eventually he became discouraged and stated that magic did not exist. Or at least, that's what he wanted people to believe. . . .

## Permitted Schools of Magic

Roman wizards are usually specialist wizards of the schools of enchantment/charm, necromancy, abjuration, alteration, or greater divination. Specialists in illusion and conjuration/summoning are rarer, but do exist. Almost no Romans are general purpose mages, and no wizards are ever specialists in evocation. The "philosopher-mage" (usually male) and the "Roman witch" (usually female) are the basic archetypes; kits for designing them have been provided in the "Characters" chapter.

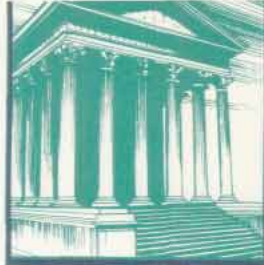
## Mythical Wizards

Besides the sinister witches native to contemporary Roman literature, the learned knew of several near-mythical foreign magi whose legendary exploits formed the ancient traditions of magic. Wizardly characters could belong to secret schools or guilds tracing their magical knowledge back to one of these founders of the mystic arts. Or perhaps one of these wizards could be still alive, having found magical immortality!

The wizards Apusorus of Media, Marmarus of Babylonia, Tarmoendas of Assyria, Zoratus of Media, and Zoroaster of Persia were believed to have founded the arcane arts thousands of years ago. Each was reputed to have written rare books that could instruct the lucky finder in sorcery. Finding a copy of one of one of their tomes would be a great quest, but the book would certainly be at least the equivalent of either a *libram of gainful conjuration*, a *libram of ineffable damnation*, or a *libram of silver magic*. The DM should decide on the alignment of the creator and plant legends as to the book's true nature and possible location.

Other mages left powerful legacies: Dardanus, the legendary first king of Troy (and thus associated with Rome through Aeneas) was thought to have been a powerful magician. His tomb—somewhere in the ruins of the lost city of Troy—was rumored to contain powerful spells or magical items. The long-dead Greek philosophers Pythagorus and Democritus were believed to have dabbled in magic and recorded their secrets in books that were lost by Roman times. Finally, the legendary Greek witches Circe (Odysseus's enemy, who polymorphed men into pigs) and Medea (Jason's lover and nemesis) from Greek mythology were known to have been the most powerful female spellcasters to have ever lived. If they had somehow survived, they would among





the greatest foes (or most powerful allies) anyone could encounter!

## Foretelling the Future

Romans considered divination the most reliable type of magic. Indeed, some Romans considered forms of divination, such as astrology, to be not magic at all, but rather science.

Divination was part of the state religion, and senior senators were awarded the honor of becoming “augurs.” An augur did not try to foretell the future, but rather divined whether or not the gods approved of actions to be taken. The most common means of augury was to study the flight of birds or the feeding habits of sacred chickens. Roman magistrates (including army commanders) were expected to take auguries prior to important political or military decisions. They did the job by rote, and sometimes rigged the results to ensure morale remained steady, or to discredit rivals! The Roman government also owned a collection of ancient oracular wisdom called the Sibylline Books. State officials consulted these on important occasions.

More mystical forms of divination were also used. Traveling merchants would make a point of consulting the most famous temple oracles, such as Apollo’s Oracle of Delphi in Greece, before making major business decisions. Obviously not everyone had the time or money to visit a world-famous oracle. But an average Roman citizen would talk to his village witch, an astrologer, or a wandering soothsayer before embarking on a marriage, a business deal, or a long journey.

Use the rules for the Astrology proficiency to govern the operation of professional diviners, whether the diviners actually use astrology or other common forms of fortune telling, such as interpreting prophetic dreams or the flights of birds. For state-run auguries, assume anyone with Religion skill can, on a successful proficiency check, make the augury come out to support whatever action he likes.

Perhaps even more than formal divination, Romans believed in “natural” signs and omens, such as the sudden appearance of certain kinds of animals, which foretold good or bad fortune.

Every so often, the DM should have an event take place that could be interpreted as a good or bad omen. The biggest effect is on NPCs, and their reactions should be role-played by the DM. Hirelings may be nervous or unwilling to fight or work on an ill-omened site, or a bad omen might

spell the end of a business deal, marriage plans, or the like.

If an omen occurs before a battle, an ill omen should give a –2 penalty to friendly Morale checks, while a good omen should give a +1 bonus. Omens were important enough that methods of stopping a panic caused by a bad omen were described in Roman military manuals!

Here are some typical omens:

- Spotting a live woodpecker (sacred to Mars) was a sign of good luck.
- A broken statue of an ancestor meant bad luck was coming to that person or his family.
- If a general stumbled just before a campaign or battle, it was considered very bad luck.

Any other unusual occurrence could be seen as good or bad, depending on the circumstances. Meteors, eclipses, and earthquakes were sometimes taken as portents of disaster. Surprising coincidences could also be good or bad omens, depending on individual interpretation.

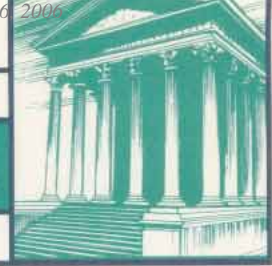
Not all Romans believed in omens. A clever man could “spin doctor” what seemed like a bad omen into a good one. For instance, Scipio Africanus, having transported his army from Italy to Africa, slipped while disembarking from his ship. His men were dismayed—was the invasion of Carthage doomed? The wily Scipio acted quickly, exclaiming “Congratulate me, my men! I have hit Africa hard.” He exhorted them to do the same during their assault. The panic ended as quickly as it had begun.

If the characters come up with a clever line like Scipio’s, a successful Oratory roll can tell it convincingly enough to negate the morale effects of a bad omen!

## Omens and Auguries

As mentioned in the “Characters” chapter, some character kits (e.g., the philosopher-mage) that have the ability to cast omens may do so by observing the flight of birds, interpreting dreams, or by other methods discussed earlier. Omens are cast only for significant tasks, such as a battle or a long journey. If the DM has some idea of what is going to happen, he can create either a good or bad omen. Otherwise, roll randomly on the following table.



**Table 1: Omens**

D10 Roll	Result
1	<i>Ill Omen:</i> It is a very inauspicious time to perform the task. For the rest of the day, double the chance of encounters, penalize encounter reactions by -3, and penalize all party members' attack and saving throw rolls by -1. Travel speed is halved.
2-3	<i>Great Danger:</i> As above. In addition, opponents receive a +1 bonus to their attack rolls.
4-7	<i>Neutral Omen:</i> The signs provide little information. No modifiers.
8-9	<i>Favorable Omen:</i> Good signs. All encounter reactions gain a +1 bonus, and all opponents suffer a -1 penalty to their attack and saving throw rolls for the remainder of the day. Travel speed is increased by 50%.
10	<i>Auspicious Omen:</i> The gods are smiling. As above, but each party member also gains a +1 bonus to all saving throws rolled that day.

## Finding a Wizard

If the characters wish to find a real spellcaster, the best place to look for a witch is the Italian and Sicilian countryside—almost every village should have a 1st- to 3rd-level wizard (designed using the Witch kit). Higher-level witches are much rarer and harder to find. Some attach themselves to the households of the wealthy. Others live in secret places in the wilderness, near tombs and graveyards, or in old ruined houses in the urban slums. Others *are* wealthy: Ovid's witches were often rich widows who practice magic in secret.

The most powerful witches are reputed to come not from Italy but from the Thessalian countryside in northern Greece (in the province of Macedonia). Thessalian witches are often multi-classed wizard/priests. Roman authors mention their ritual of "drawing down the moon."

A philosopher-mage was as likely to be Greek, Egyptian, or Persian as he was a Roman. Unless he is very powerful, he usually seeks a wealthy patron, and lives in his house.

Soothsayers could be found almost anywhere, although they usually preferred sizable towns and large cities.

## Wizard Spells

In a historical fantasy campaign centered on ancient Rome, several spells should not be available in order to preserve the flavor of antiquity.

No evocation spells are allowed. The flashy magic missiles and fireballs of this school have no place in a Roman campaign. In addition, the following spells should be banned: *shocking grasp*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *Leomund's tiny hut*, *Melf's minute meteors*, *fire shield*, *Otiluke's resilient sphere*, *conjure elemental*, and *distance distortion*. Also, no 6th-, 7th-, 8th- or 9th- level spells should be available at all! The DM should judge what spells from sources other than the *Players Handbook* are disallowed; those similar to the spells listed above should not be permitted.

## New Spells

Some new spells suggested by Roman folklore are described below:

### Protective Amulet (Abjuration, Enchantment)

Level: 1

Range: 0

Components: V,S,M

Duration: 1 week/level

Casting Time: 6 turns

Area of Effect: Special

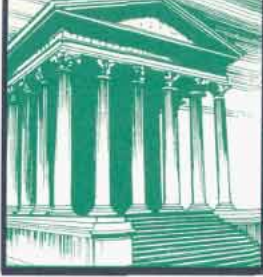
Saving Throw: None

This spell must be cast on a small talisman, such as a pendant, amulet, or other item of jewelry. It is now transformed into a protective device against a single specific spell. This must be one the caster knows and for which a saving throw is normally allowed. For instance, an amulet can be made to protect against *charm person*, but not against *sleep* or *magic missile*.

If the wearer of a protective amulet is attacked by the spell the amulet was made to ward against, the wearer rolls his saving throw in the normal fashion. However, if he fails his saving throw, the amulet absorbs the energy of the spell. The amulet shatters (and is now useless) but the wearer is treated as having made his saving throw!

A protective amulet must be an item of jewelry. Its cost must be at least 10 denarii (to protect against a 1st-level spell. The cost increases to 20 denarii for an amulet against a 2nd-level spell, 40 denarii against a 3rd-level spell, 80 denarii against a 4th-level spell, and so on.





If a person wears more than one amulet of protection vs. the same spell at a time, their energies cancel out and none of them work!

Roman witches often sold protective amulets: it was a major source of income! Most towns have a witch of 1st- to 3rd-level who makes a good living selling amulets against common 1st- or 2nd-level offensive spells, such as *charm person*, *hypnotism*, *spook*, *blindness*, *forget*, or *irritation*. Depending on her reaction to the prospective buyer, a witch usually charges two to five times the monetary cost of the amulet for the spell.

#### Seal Mouth (Alteration, Enchantment/Charm)

Level: 2

Range: 10 yards/level

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 2 turns/level

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: 1 creature

Saving Throw: Negates

This spell prevents a person from being able to speak against the caster! A subject who fails his saving throw is unable to say anything he believes to be insulting, critical, or otherwise defamatory about the caster—if he tries, his lips seal shut and no words come out. The spell's material component is a mouse hole, which must be sealed with pitch.

#### Love Spell (Enchantment/Charm)

Level 3

Range: 120 yards

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: 1 person

Saving Throw: Negates

This spell is identical to *charm person* in all respects but two. First, the caster may specify that the spell recipient becomes enthralled with a person of the opposite sex. This may be herself or anyone else whose name the caster knows. If it is someone not present, the spell's effects are felt only when the subject first sees that person. Second, to the normal effects of a *charm person* (trust and friendship) are coupled a strong desire for romance.

The caster must have in her possession something belonging to both the subject and the spell's object in order to cast this spell.

#### Curse Tablet (Necromantic)

Level: 3

Range: 5 yards/level

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 2 days/level

Casting Time: 1 turn

Area of Effect: 1 creature

Saving Throw: Negates

This is the most common spell used by evil Roman magicians to kill via magic. The caster writes the name of his victim on a lead tablet, drives a nail through the tablet, invokes the spirits of the dead, and places the tablet within an occupied tomb.

Every midnight the subject must roll a saving roll vs. spell. If he fails the roll, he suffers horrible dreams of his own death and awakens sick and exhausted, having lost half his current hit points (round fractions down) or 1 hit point, whichever is greater. If he succeeds, there is no effect. If he succeeds three times in a row, the curse is broken, the writing on the tablet vanishes, and that particular wizard cannot use a *curse tablet* against him for one year.

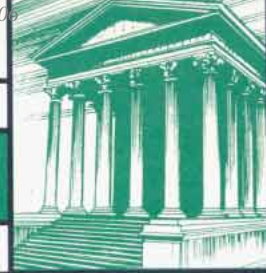
The spell can be safely negated by finding the tablet (it radiates magic and evil) and casting a *bless* or *remove curse* spell upon it. Melting or breaking the tablet also breaks the curse, but this causes 1d4 points of damage to the subject.

### Magical Items

The magic of ancient Rome does not tend toward the creation of powerful magical items; even relatively minor items, such as *swords +1* are very rare. The "domestically produced" items created by Roman spellcasters are usually scrolls, potions, and protective amulets. A few magical swords, armor, and other items entered Roman consciousness by way of Greek or Celtic myth, but powerful magical items are very rare or nonexistent.

The art of enchantment was not entirely unknown, however. In theory, anything a Persian or Gallic wizard could produce might eventually find its way to Rome. Roman soldiers might even end up bearing enchanted Celtic swords or other exotic items they acquired as booty. Besides scrolls and potions, Roman magical items are usually curiosities brought back as gifts or booty by wealthy senators or knights who traveled in foreign lands. The owner will often be missing any necessary command words, and may not even believe the item is magical.





Enchanted weapons are rare in Rome. The reasons are cultural. In barbarian or medieval realms, the wealthy aristocracy is expected to show its prowess through personal combat, so wizards wishing to curry favor with warrior-nobles create magical weapons for these fighters. But in Rome, while an aristocratic commander was expected to fight bravely when necessary, his main role was to be a good general rather than a superior hand-to-hand fighter. If a Roman aristocrat wanted a magical item made, it would be one that could control others or protect him from physical or magical harm, not a melee weapon!

Roman magicians believed that certain objects were especially easy to enchant, so these are often used when making magical items. Objects taken from the dead or that were struck by lightning were particularly potent!

## Magical Items

D100 Roll	Item
01-30	Potions and Oils
31-59	Scrolls
60	Rings
61-62	Rods
63	Staves
64-65	Wands
66-70	Books and Tomes
70-71	Cloaks and Robes
72	Boots and Gloves
73	Girdles and Helms
74	Bags and Bottles
75-76	Dust and Stones
77	Household Items/Tools
78-79	Musical Instruments
80	Weird Stuff
81-90	Armor and Shields
91-00	Weapons

## Nonapplicable Magical Items

The following magical items simply do not fit in with Roman campaigns:

*Potions and Oils:* Giant Control, Giant Strength

*Rings:* Djinni Summoning, Shooting Stars, X-ray Vision

*Rod\*:* Flailing

*Staves:* Mace, Magi, Slinging, Power, Thunder, and Lightning

*Wands:* Fire, Frost, Lightning, Magic Missiles

*Jewels, Jewelry, Phylacteries:* Beads of Force, Necklace of Missiles

*Cloak \*\*:* Elvenkind

*Boots:* Elvenkind, Levitation

*Girdles:* Dwarvenkind, Giant Strength

*Containers:* Efreeti Bottle, Eversmoking Bottle, Iron Flask

*Musical Instruments:* Horn of Valhalla

*Armor and Shields:* for any armor except leather, substitute lorica hamata, lorica segmenta, or gladiatorial armor.

*Magical Weapons \*\*\*:* bolts and crossbows, military picks, morning stars, pole arms, hammers or warhammers, sword—giant or dragon slayer, sword—holy avenger

\*When a rod is rolled, the DM may substitute a *fascis*—a bundle of rods carried before Roman magistrates as a symbol of power.

\*\*When a magical robe is rolled, the DM may wish to substitute a toga with the same enchantment.

\*\*\*70% of Roman swords are short swords (gladius) while 30% are long swords (spatha).

## New Magical Items

Two very common magical items are described below:

### Scorpion Ward

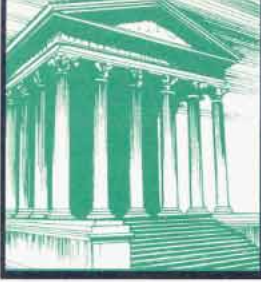
Romans greatly feared the power of wizards with the evil eye. One of the magical items used to protect against it was the *scorpion ward*. This is a small, hardened clay or metal statue of a scorpion of average workmanship. If it is placed just inside the doorway of a home and a short prayer is said to the household gods, the magic of the statue protects the people who live in the house against the evil eye.

Any residents of the household (including family members, servants, and slaves, but not guests) receive a +3 bonus to saving throws against the evil eye, as long as the *scorpion ward* remains in their home's doorway. It is worth 250 XP.

### Amulet Against Disease

This common Roman magical item is an amulet inscribed to various gods and spirits of healing. It functions as a *periapt of health* (total protection vs. disease) but only against one specific form of disease or illness (e.g., headaches, common colds, wasting diseases, etc.). It is worth 350 XP.





## Religion

The Romans believed countless spirits permeated reality. Each tree or river had its own spirit, as did every wood, ocean, and mountain. Other spirits lived in the home, in cupboards, doorways, and hearthfires. Activities from sowing a field to warfare had patron spirits, as did qualities like luck. The most important spirits were named, while many others were nameless.

The Greeks gave the Romans the idea of gods with personalities, so early in Roman history, the important spirits whose spheres of influence coincided with those of the major Greek gods were identified with them. For instance, Mars, the Roman spirit of battle, became to be seen as counterpart to the Greek war god Ares, while the Roman corn spirit Ceres took on the personality and gender of the Greek nature goddess Demeter.

No Roman worshiped every god or spirit. He left offerings to those who lived near or in the home, or prayed to those whose spheres coincided with his livelihood or activities. For example, before plowing a corn field, a farmer would invoke Ceres, but he would also take care to offer prayers to the nameless spirit who lived in his field, and those other minor spirits who governed the different acts of clearing the land and plowing it. A man who planned a sea voyage might offer prayers for a safe and swift journey to Mercury as god of travel, Neptune as god of the sea, Jupiter as god of storms, and to the nameless spirit of the ship itself. Roman prayers were often cast in the form of a vow; you promised to sacrifice to the god if he delivered what you asked of him. Romans believed that the gods had many names and aspects, some of which might be unknown, so prayers (especially to nameless spirits) often included formulas like “whether you are a god or goddess” or “hallowed be thy name, whatever name you prefer.” A Roman might pray to several gods and then offer thanks to “any other gods or goddesses who may take an interest in these affairs.”

With such a multitude of deities, Rome was very tolerant of other nations’ gods. During times of crisis, the priests of Rome sometimes decided to adopt foreign gods into the state cult, reasoning that since all gods already existed, things might get better once that particular previously neglected god was receiving Rome’s worship. Similarly, when Roman armies besieged an enemy city, the commanders performed rituals to invite the city’s patron gods to

leave and come to Rome to be worshiped. After capturing the city they made sure to remove any statues of the god and send them back to Rome. The most significant adoptions were those of the healing god Aesculapius in 293 B.C. and Cybele the Great Mother in 205 B.C.

If newly absorbed deities were similar to existing ones, they might even simply be considered aspects of them, and worshiped as such. Thus the Celtic war god Toutatis became “Mars Toutatis” when Rome conquered Gaul. Roman soldiers serving in Gallic lands would be as likely to swear oaths to Mars under that name as any other.

Each Roman household had its own small shrine and statues honoring the household spirits of hearth and home, the most important local spirits, and sometimes the major Olympian gods the family favored.

Daily worship involved a gift of fruit or wine left out at night and dedicated to the god; it was often eaten or drunk by slaves late at night! More important occasions were marked by gifts to temples or the burnt offering of a goat, sheep, or cow accompanied by music and prayer. The smoke went to the gods, while the meat fed the worshipers. Some temples doubled as butcher’s shops, selling the meat to the neighborhood.

One kind of offering was strictly forbidden by Rome: human sacrifice. The Roman government and its legions took pains to suppress those cults or individuals who practiced such evil rituals. This was a major reason for Rome’s war against the Celtic druids.

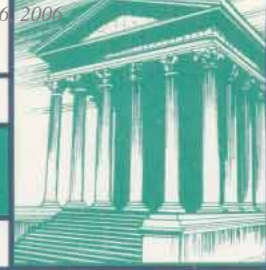
Public festivals were also held to honor the gods. Romans believed that by properly worshipping the traditional gods, Rome’s luck was preserved.

Religious rites were part of all major public events, from the circus to meetings of the senate. Public festivals were commemorated by circuses and gladiatorial games as well as religious rites—see the “Games” chapter for their names and dates.

Building a temple to a god was an expression of piety, since it gave him or her a house to live in. As such, the most important gods in Rome had several temples, each dedicated to different aspects of their being. Temples were usually maintained by the city or town, and most towns in the Greco-Roman world picked a major deity, like Ceres or Neptune, as their special patron. They built a large temple to that god or goddess, along with smaller temples or shrines to other gods.

Most temples were colonnaded buildings. Much





of a temple's business, such as sacrifices and public rites, was performed at the foot of the steps just outside the temple. The first room inside was the *ante-room*, where people arranged their business with the temple attendants. The anteroom led into the temple's central chamber, the *cella*, which was used for private prayer. The *cella* was an unfurnished, windowless walled room lit only by a small hole in the ceiling. In the center of the pool of light stood the statue of the god, glittering with jewels and gold or silver ornaments. The supplicant would stand or kneel before it. Behind the *cella* were the rooms of the attendants, offices of the priests, and the treasury of the temple.

Although Rome had many temples, the state religion had few full-time priests. Senior priestly offices were filled on a part-time basis by distinguished senators who performed their religious duties in addition to their other responsibilities.

## Life After Death

In Roman times, the concept of life after death was a shadowy one, without answers. Most Romans believed that death was the end. Their spirits might exist as shades in the underworld or return as hungry ghosts (called *manes* or *lemures*) but these shades would lack any kind of will or volition.

It was believed that these ghosts could stalk the living during special times (the feast of Lemuria in May) if rituals were not performed to keep them at bay.

The promise of life after death offered by Christianity and some mystery cults was a major factor in their popularity.

## The Roman Gods

There are too many Roman gods to detail here, especially since the numbers kept growing! In general, all normal *Legends and Lore* rules apply to Roman gods, with one exception: Avatars are very, very rare. If they appear, it is usually during mystery cult (see below) ceremonies, and only within the boundaries of their temples. Far more often, a deity sends a dream or sign (such as moving the statue in his temple slightly, or sending a sacred animal).

## Gods of the State Religion

Called "the gods of our fathers" these deities are those who received official sanction and had temples

in Rome. Since the upper ranks of the priesthood were filled by politicians, many "priests" do not count as members of that character class. However, some of the individual priests and acolytes who handle the day-to-day business of sacrifices and oracles may be devoted and experienced enough to qualify as actual priest spellcasters. In this case, the equivalent Greek deities from *Legends and Lore* should be used as a basis to determine priestly requirements.

Numerous state gods existed. The most important included the following:

*Jupiter* is the Roman version of the Greek deity Zeus. He is wielder of lightning, king of the gods, giver of courage, and patron of oaths and treaties. When Romans swore an oath "by Jupiter," they took it very seriously. There were many temples devoted to different aspects of Jupiter.

*Mars* is identified with the Greek deity Ares, god of war. He was also the father of Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome. His sacred animals were the wolf and woodpecker.

*Quirinus* was the name given to Romulus after his death. He was believed to have become a demigod patron deity of Rome, a god of harmonious agreements. Actual priest characters should use the God of Community from the *Complete Priest* sourcebook as a guideline.

*Ceres* was the ancient Italian goddess of corn and agriculture, identified with the Greek deity Demeter. Her following was large and influential, and may well have actual priest characters under the political appointees.

*Juno* was a version of the Greek deity Hera, the Queen of Heaven and patron of women, marriage, and childbirth. She was also patron of coinage. The temple to Juno Moneta ("giver of timely warnings") in Rome housed the state mint, and gives us our name "money."

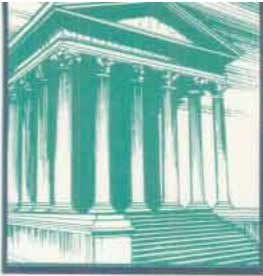
*Mercury* was the same as the Greek deity Hermes, god of thieves, travel, and merchants. His most important role in Rome was as god of trade. The merchant's guild were headquartered in his temple.

*Venus* was a version of the Greek love goddess Aphrodite. She was very popular in Rome, especially as patron of illicit love, with several temples.

*Diana* was a version of the Greek deity Artemis, goddess of women, hunting, and the moon. In Rome she was also the protector of slaves. The high priest of her major temple had to be an escaped slave who had slain his predecessor in single combat!

*Vulcan* was a version of the Greek Hephaestus, god of fire and the forge. He was also god of earth-





quakes and volcanoes; at 13th level, his priests add the granted power to dispel an earthquake or eruption as it begins, once per week. His temples were restricted to beyond city limits!

*Neptune* was the god of the sea, the Roman version of the Greek deity *Poseidon*. He was served by priests but was primarily important to sailors and fishermen. He was also associated with horses, and his priests took part in processions at the circus.

*Bellona* was the chief Roman goddess of foreign wars, and her blessing was sought to make sure that Rome never entered an “unjust” war. She was not directly associated with any Greek gods; use the statistics for *Mars*. Her temple was on the *Campus Martius* and was often used a meeting place of the Senate outside the city walls, especially for formal declarations of war.

*Vesta* was the goddess of Rome’s hearthfire, identified with the Greek deity *Hestia*. A sacred hearth fire was kept in the temple of *Vesta* in Rome. It was tended by six *Vestal Virgins* selected from young girls of noble family. Each Virgin served for 30 years. They had to remain chaste and prevent the fire going out or Rome’s luck would turn bad. If they failed in their vows, they could be buried alive. The *Vestal Virgins* had no special political or priestly powers, but (during the Empire) they were sometimes covertly involved in palace politics. If a condemned man happened to see a *Vestal Virgin*, he could not be slain.

*Hercules* was the Roman version of the Greek demigod *Heracles*. Unlike *Heracles*, he was actively worshiped, serving as patron of the circus, and he had several major temples. Use the *Hercules* description in *Legends and Lore*, but add the God of Strength attributes from *The Complete Priest*.

*Apollo* was identical to the Greek deity, worshiped as god of the sun, healing, and music. But his position was mostly superseded by the imported cult of *Aesculapius*.

*Aesculapius* was worshiped for very practical reasons: His priests were considered to be the best healers of the day. *Aesculapius* was not quite part of the state religion, but he was given official sanction when his cult came to Rome in 203 B.C. According to myth, *Aesculapius* was a Greek hero who was taught medicine by the centaur *Chiron*. He was struck by a thunderbolt from *Zeus* for daring to restore a man to life, but he was later elevated into godhood. His symbol was the snake, and a sacred snake was released to find the ground where new temples would be built. Even more than the priests of *Apollo*, the priests of *Aesculapius* were renowned for their

miraculous healing powers.

The many magnificent temples contained baths (famed for the therapeutic properties) and gymnasia. His avatar is a mature, bearded man, similar to *Jupiter*, but with a kindly expression. He carries a staff with a snake coiled around it. Use the God of Healing from *The Complete Priest*—it appears to be based upon *Aesculapius*.

*Minerva* was similar to the Greek deity *Athena*, goddess of wisdom and war. Her Roman temple was the headquarters of a guild of writers and actors. Unlike most state temples, *Minerva* often had an influential female priestess.

*Castor and Pollux* were the Greek demigod heroes who became the Roman gods of boxing and horse racing. Like *Hercules* they were invoked prior to the games.

*Hecate*, Greco-Roman goddess of night and magic, and *Plutō*, the Roman version of the Greek underworld-god *Hades*, were invoked by witches and sorcerers, but had no official cult or temples.

*Fortuna* (luck), *Victoria* (victory), *Justicia* (justice) and others were “divine qualities” without embodiment or personality, but they had temples and were worshiped.

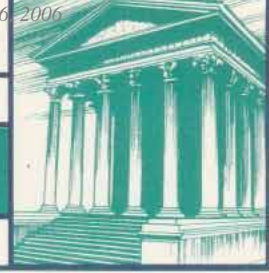
## Mystery Cults

The mystery cults came to Rome from Greece, Asia, and Egypt. They possessed a professional priesthood (count as AD&D® game priests). They were called mystery cults because their rites were kept secret from the public and were gradually revealed to members during initiation ceremonies.

The mystery cults were popular because they offered an intense spiritual experience. Temple rites included frenzied dancing and singing and elaborate pageantry. Their priests claimed magical powers and, unlike those of the state religion, often promised faithful worshipers some form of life after death.

The mystery cults were not fringe organizations. In some areas of the Roman world (including Rome itself) they were the most popular religions! However, the temples of the popular mystery cults of *Bacchus*, *Isis*, and (especially) *Cybele* were periodically shut down by the senate. This was because the behavior of their acolytes upset the conservative Roman statesmen. However, this suppression was relatively mild. The cults were able to operate underground until the air cleared, and there was little or no punishment for cult members.





Game statistics for the mystery cult priests are given in the "Characters" chapter. Their religions are detailed here:

**Isis:** The most widely worshiped deity in the Greco-Roman world was not a native Greek or Roman god but the ancient Egyptian goddess Isis. The Isis who was worshiped in Greece and Rome was far more potent than her Egyptian ancestor. Of Isis, one of her worshipers wrote: "I am nature, the parent of things, the sovereign of the elements, the primary progeny of time, the most exalted of the deities, the first of the heavenly gods and goddesses, the queen of the dead, manifested alone and in one form. . . ." Isis was the supreme goddess, mistress of magic. Use the description of her given in the "Characters" chapter. Her masked priesthood were ethnic Egyptians, and holy water from the Nile figured in ceremonies. Her temples featured a carved stone moon-boat containing her figure. Her cult came to Rome in 80 B.C.; the worship of Isis flourished until the 3rd century A.D., when her role was gradually superseded by Christian veneration of the Virgin Mary.

**Cybele:** Next to Isis in importance was Cybele, also called Magna Mater, the Great Mother. She was a potent fertility deity. The goddess was brought to Rome from Asia Minor in 203 B.C. to join the state cult. Her worshipers rapidly alienated conservative Romans with exotic rites involving magical rituals, self-mutilation, and wild orgies. Cybele was the goddess of untamed nature, who cured (and sent) diseases, gave oracles and fiercely protected her worshipers in battle. She was depicted as a crowned woman flanked by lions. Her priests were officially invited from Asia Minor to Rome in 204 B.C., but the cult's frenzied rites alienated conservative Romans and it was suppressed by the senate.

Cybele's rites featured the Taurobolium (a baptism in ram's blood), wild sword-wielding dancers who gashed themselves until they bled, and mysterious underground rituals. These rites culminated in a spring festival (22nd to 25th March) commemorating the harvest and the death of Cybele's lover, Attis. In Rome, the festival was celebrated with a noisy procession bearing the pine tree symbol of Attis through the streets to her temple, followed by magical rites, wild partying, and finally a ritual bathing of Cybele's image.

**Ceres:** This goddess and her other aspects, Kore and Demeter, were part of the Roman state religion, but as

goddess of the fertile earth Ceres was worshiped as a mystery cult. The Eleusinian mysteries are described in the Demeter entry in *Legends and Lore*.

**Bacchus:** This god was identified with Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and fertility. Bacchic revels involved drinking, music, and dancing. These were sometimes only an excuse for wild parties. The worship of Bacchus was condemned by the senate, but it was too popular and disorganized to easily suppress. Use the *Legends and Lore* description of Dionysus.

**Mithras:** Worship of the Persia deity Mithras, god of fire, light, and the sun began in Republican times, but it didn't reach Rome until some time in the first century of the Empire. In myth, the god was born from a rock, slew a sacred bull, triumphed over death, and became the adopted son of the mighty Sun god. Mithras was a soldier god who struggled against evil.

Worshipers were expected to be brave, show humility, and help other cultists. In return the god gave them strength and promised them life after death. For a time, Mithraism came close to displacing Christianity as the main religion of the Empire. The god was especially popular among legionary officers, pirates, and traveling merchants. His symbols were the bull and the spear, his titles Lord of Light, God of Truth, Savior from Death, Victorious Warrior, and Son of the Sun.

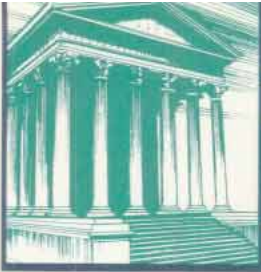
## The Imperial Cult

Many inhabitants of the oriental eastern part of the Empire traditionally considered kings to be semi-divine. The emperors encouraged this, arranging for popular emperors, such as Augustus and Claudius, to be honored by being given the status of gods after their death. A living emperor was not considered a god, but people were encouraged to sacrifice to his genius ("family spirit") by burning incense to him.

This was more a sign of political respect than of divine reverence, but Christian refusal to follow this ritual was one reason for their persecution. In the 3rd century A.D., a few of the more dictatorial emperors demanded they be worshiped while they were alive, often associating themselves with a sun god.

DMs should (probably) not give dead emperors real demigod status or allow them to grant spells to priests!





## Judaeo-Christian Religions

Judaism needs little introduction, since it still exists. It was distinct from other ancient religions because the Jews believed their god was the only true deity.

The Jewish faith was initially centered around the great temple of Jerusalem and its priesthood. Jewish merchants had spread throughout the Roman world, living in Jewish districts in the city of Rome (especially the Subura, site of an important synagogue) and most of the Greek-speaking cities to the east of Italy. Toward the end of the Republic, Judaea came under Roman control. Because the Jews supported the victorious Augustus during the Civil War, the Jews were granted privileges, including freedom to be tried under their own laws and an exemption from requirements to worship the emperor. Attempts by later emperors to tax or restrict these rights led to unrest and Jewish uprisings, and ultimately resulted in the destruction of the Great Temple in the Jewish War that ended in A.D. 70. With the destruction of the temple, preserving and teaching the Jewish faith became the responsibility of local synagogues and rabbis.

*Christianity:* During the first century A.D., several fringe Jewish sects appeared. One of them was Christianity. Its major split from Judaism came when the Apostle Paul decided to try to convert gentiles (non-Jews). The Christian message of a single loving god who promised his followers life after death spread rapidly through the Empire on ground fertilized by the mystery cults. By the middle of the first century A.D., there were small Christian enclaves in most cities.

Early Christianity was distinguished from medieval Catholicism by a decentralized hierarchy, secrecy (because it was often persecuted), missionary zeal, and a total prohibition against killing, even in just wars. The major Christian symbol was the fish—the cross did not become popular until the Dark Ages.

Rome was more hostile to Christianity than to any other religious group except the Celtic druids. The major reason for this was the attitude of Christianity. Christians did not recognize other gods, and since no one liked to be told their old gods were false, this won few friends!

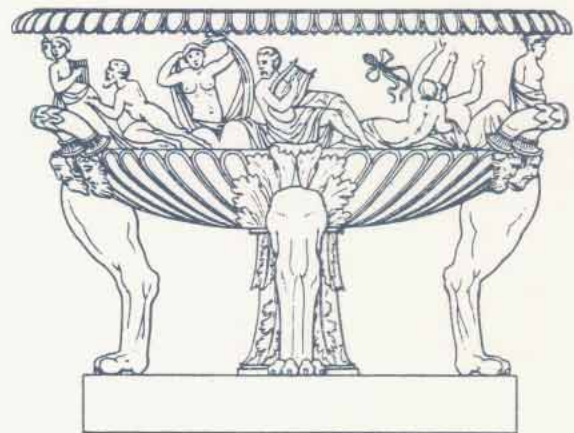
Also, early Christians had many different sects that quarrelled publicly over interpretation of the gospel. These disputes often degenerated into street riots, which gave Christians a reputation as trouble makers. Furthermore, the state religion and cult of the emperor was part and parcel of the army and the

government. No Christian would swear an oath to the emperor or the pagan gods, but such oaths were required of many military and government positions. Early Christians also had scruples against killing and felt they could not serve in the army or government where they might have to fight or send others to their deaths. This got them branded as unpatriotic. Finally, Christians liked to hold services in private, out of the eyes of unbelievers. Since they were already disliked for the reasons noted above, rumors naturally sprang up that they, like the mystery cults, were engaged in deviant behavior, human sacrifice, and so on.

So these secretive, unpatriotic, trouble-making, intolerant Christians were disliked at the best of times and prime scapegoats whenever anything went wrong, be it a missing child or the Great Fire of Rome. As a result, there were periodic persecutions.

A typical Christian persecution consisted of an over-zealous local magistrate blaming the local Christian community for some crime, such as arson, human sacrifice, or rioting, and sending out informers and soldiers to bring in all the Christians. A prisoner's Christianity was tested by asking him to sacrifice to the emperor or the gods or to profane a Christian symbol. A person who declined was sentenced to death, often slain by animals in the arena.

Despite periodic persecution, Christian numbers rapidly increased. By 260 A.D. Christianity was the fastest-growing religion in the Empire, counting between 5% and 10% of the population as adherents. It was soon granted immunity from persecution. The emperor Constantine (312 A.D.) saw which way the wind was blowing, and Christianity became the new state religion, to unify the Empire.





## Equipment

The Roman world is less technologically advanced than the typical medieval milieu, but its trade, industry, and commerce are better organized and its urban population density is higher. While some types of gear, such as late medieval ships or plate armor, are totally unavailable, most items are very easy to acquire. Thanks to well-organized trade routes, wealthy Romans can order exotic equipment from distant parts of the world and stand a good chance of getting it at a reasonable price.

### Money

As a civilized nation, Rome had a monetary economy. In fact, we get our word “money” from the temple of Juno Moneta, where the Roman mint was located. The values of Roman coins varied over time, but the main currency of the later Republic and early Empire consisted of the following denominations:

**As:** A large bronze or copper coin (plural—asses). A day’s wage for a semi-skilled laborer was five to ten asses.

**Sestertius (HS):** A small copper, brass, or silver piece, worth four asses. Abbreviated HS.

**Denarius (D):** A silver coin worth four sestertii or 16 asses. Abbreviated D.

**Aureus (Au):** A gold coin, usually worth 25 denarii, 100 sestertii, or 400 asses. It was for use by the state, not individuals.

**Table 1: Coinage**

Coin Type	Avg. Metal	Weight	Game Equivalent
Aureus	Gold	½ oz	4 gp
Denarius	Silver	½ oz	16 cp
Sestertius	Brass	½ oz	4 cp
As	Copper	½ oz	1 cp

**Table 2: Exchange Rates**

	Au.	D.	HS.	As
Aureus	1	25	100	400
Denarius	⅕	1	4	16
Sestertius	⅒	¼	1	4
As	⅓	⅓	¼	1

### Equipment

Almost all items listed on the AD&D® game’s price list were available in Rome or through trade with foreign merchants.

To convert prices, convert to copper pieces. This gives prices in asses, the standard small Roman coin.

For social or technological reasons, some equipment is unavailable.

**Prohibited Equipment:** beer; barding (any); Greek fire; medium or heavy warhorse; canoe; coaster; cog; drakkar; dromond; galleon; knarr; longship; silk jacket; spyglass; surcoat; water clock

**Prohibited Weapons:** arquebus; blowgun; bow, long; crossbow; lance, heavy; lance, jousting; mancatcher; polearm (all); scimitar; sword, bastard; two-handed sword; warhammer

**Prohibited Armor:** banded mail\*; brigandine; field plate; full plate; helmet, great helm; splint mail; studded leather; plate mail

\* = Available in different form as lorica segmenta.

**Altered Prices:** A public bath in Rome is only .25 asses. Scribes are available at 10% of normal price.

**Inflation:** Imperial Rome suffered from serious inflationary problems. In general, prices went up and people got poorer. After circa 100 A.D., double all prices for equipment and add 50% to wages. After circa 300 A.D., increase all prices tenfold and quadruple all wages.

### Goods and Services

These notes explain the entries in the following table, concerning costs that are unique to a Roman campaign. If no price is given, convert the price in the *Player’s Handbook*.

**Living Expenses:** These should be paid monthly (see the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide*, page 34). Middle-class expenses apply to most equestrians, while upper-class applies to sitting senators. They are somewhat different in Rome. For characters outside of Rome itself, halve the cost!

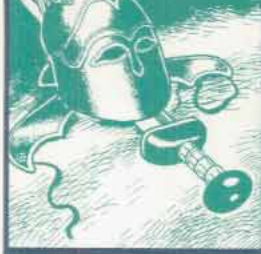
**Drink:** Well-off Romans drank wine. Rather than beer, the poor drank *posca* (sour, vinegary wine) and *calda* (hot spiced water). Both are the same cost as beer.

**Food:** Roman food is discussed in Chapter 8: Roman Culture.

**Loans:** Loans were common in Rome. Equestrians and senators loaned money to each other at usual rates of 6–12%.

**Luxuries:** Luxuries may be almost anything. Books (in the form of papyrus or parchment rolls) are common hobbies of the rich, sold in specialist book stores—upper class Greeks and Romans were prolific writers. Rare works by Greek philosophers or playwrights may fetch many times the listed cost.





Other favorite purchases include furniture or bowls made from lustrous African citrus wood, exotic imported delicacies, and artistic or religious statues created by Greek masters. Jewelry usually used gold, silver, emeralds, or beryls—rubies were rare and cut diamonds were unknown.

**Property:** A *domus* is a townhouse. A *villa* is a country or vacation estate, while an *insulae* is a multi-story apartment block. The best locations in Rome were near the Palatine hill. Places in bad locations (e.g., near smelly fish or meat markets, or in the Subara slums) were cheaper. Prices in distant provincial cities were less those in Rome. *Investment* property could be anything: shipping, mines, factories, plantations, snail concessions, or gladiator schools.

**Month's Rent:** Apartments in *insulae* varied in cost—the best places were in Rome on ground floors. Upper story rooms were notoriously small and dilapidated—and Romans had no elevators! As with houses, undesirable locations are cheaper.

**Land Transport:** Land transport is usually by carriage (*raeda*), wagon (*plaustrum*), or slave-drawn sedan chair. Fast riding chariots (*cisium*) were also available. For prices, see the *Player's Handbook*.

**Water Transport:** Water transport is by river barge, small keelboat, or oared galley.

**Clothing:** Men wore a short belted *tunic*, with a cloak in cold weather. On formal occasions, male citizens wore Rome's national dress—the toga, 100 square feet of white or off-white linen artfully draped around the body, held in place by the wearer's pose. Equestrian status was marked by a narrow purple stripe on a tunic or toga's shoulder, while senators had a wide purple stripe. In cold weather an open mantle (*lacerna*) or sleeveless hooded traveler's cloak (*paenula*) was worn.

Women's underclothes consisted of the shirt-like *tunica interior* and the *mammillare* (a leather breast-band). Over that unmarried women wore an ankle-length girdled tunic (*tunica exterior*), while married women wore the long, many-folded gown (*stola*) that bunched about the feet and a shawl.

Footwear was usually sandals; soldiers wore the *caliga*, a heavy marching boot laced up the instep and secured by thongs.

Foreigners often wore breeches, tunics, or robes.

**Haircuts:** Men cut their hair short, with no beard or mustache. Women wore simple straight or curly hair styles. In Imperial times, curls for upper-class men

and elaborate coiffures for aristocratic women became the fashion. An elaborate hairdo cost 100 asses, but many women bought hairdressing slaves instead.

**Bribes:** Bribes are needed to get officials to perform their duties or to avoid harassment. Such a bribe gets the official to listen to the character's proposition, to expedite any legal service normally within his sphere of influence, or to grant the PC an introduction to that person's superior. To bribe an official to overlook an illegal act costs at least ten times as much, and to get one to perform an illegal act costs 100 times as much—and if the DM decides the official is honest, the PC may be arrested!

**Senatorial Expenses:** A senator or prospective senator, especially one who hoped to run for election to high office, was expected to spend vast sums of money on everything from entertaining clients to new public bath houses to gladiatorial games. Some typical expenses are given in the following table.

**Slaves:** Rome's economy was based on slave holding, but thanks to war captives, supply usually exceeded demand! All slaves required a bill of sale certifying that they were sane, free of disease, and not given to rebellion or religious fanaticism. An untrained barbarian who couldn't speak Latin was very cheap; a skilled or attractive slave, especially a teacher or entertainer, could be expensive.

## Miscellaneous Prices

Prices for items mentioned above are given below. Where items are neither prohibited nor listed below, use normal AD&D® game prices. Treat 1 cp as 1 as, and convert from there.

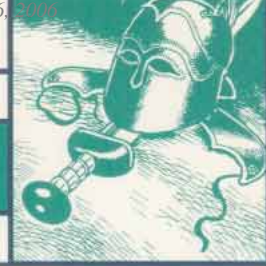
## Living Expenses

Lifestyle	Cost/Month
Squalid	120 d
Poor	240 d
Middle class	1,250 d
Wealthy	5,000 d

## Month's Rent (Insulae)

Small room	15 d
Large room	75 d
Entire floor	375 d





## Clothing

Item	Price*	Item	Price*
Caliga	2 d	Synthesis	20 d**
Lacerna	3 d	Toga	5d
Mammillare	1 d	Toga candida	100d***
Paenula	4 d	Tunic, man's	4d
Sandals	2 d	Tunica exterior	5d
Shawl	1 d	Tunica interior	4d
Stola	7 d		

\*Quadruple prices for clothing for equestrians or senators.

\*\*Men's party tunic

\*\*\*Bleached white, worn by electoral candidates

## Bribes\*

Slave, freedman, or common plebeian: 1d6 × 10 d

Equestrian: 1d6 × 100 d

Senator: 1d6 × 1,000 d

\*Important posts (e.g., a slave working as a doorman for the emperor or a provincial governor) are ten times as expensive to bribe.

## Property and Rental

Purchase	Cost
Domus in Rome	125,000 d*
Country Villa	125,000 d*
Insulae (per story)	20,000 d*
Investment	Varies**

\*Halve cost if in poor location, in bad repair, or (except for villa) outside Rome.

\*\*Minimum 1,000 d. Brings in an income of (1d4-1) × 5% of purchase price per year.

## Some Luxury Items

Item	Price
Greek statues	100 d plus
Citrus wood bowl	500 d plus
Citrus wood cabinet, portable	2,500 d plus
Books	200–500 d
Rare books	2,000–5,000 d
Delicacies	20–120 d/meal*

\*Rare snails, jellyfish, oysters, peacock, etc.

## Senatorial Expenses

Elaborate party	2d4 × 50 d/guest
Maintain clients	3d6 d each/day
Sponsor a play	2d10 × 1,000 d
Gladiator combat	1,000 d per pair
Run an election	2d10 × 100,000 d
Elaborate funeral	3d6 × 10,000 d
Erect bath house	6d6 × 100,000 d*
Hold a wedding	2d6 × 10,000 d

\*Or theater, basilica (shopping arcade), other public building

## Typical Slave Prices

Example	Price
Barbarian captive	32 d
Common farm slave	160 d
Semi-skilled laborer	240 d
Household servant	480 d
Clerk (literate)	800 d
Spanish dancing girl	1,600 d
Trained gladiator or charioteer	2,400 d
Household manager	3,200 d
Reputable Greek tutor	6,400 d
Famous gladiator or entertainer	16,000 d

## Arms and Armor

Rome had only a limited array of arms and armor.

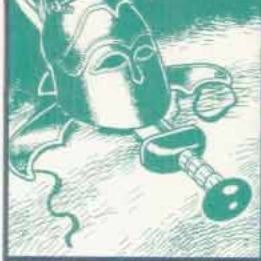
*Gladius*: A short sword. It the standard weapon of Roman legionaries and gladiators, and is of Spanish design.

*Spatha*: A long sword. It was used by auxiliary cavalry, gladiators, and the legions of the late Empire.

*Hasta*: A spear. Used by third-rank legionaries in the early Republic, and by cavalry and hunters.

*Pilum*: The basic missile weapon of the legionary. It is a heavy javelin with a barbed iron head. The last segment of the pilum's shaft up to the tip is constructed of soft metal rather than wood. Upon impact, the metal shaft bent. If the pilum stuck in a shield, this made it hard to pull out, and the pilum's weight would prevent the shield being used. If it missed, the bent shaft still disabled the pilum, preventing the enemy throwing the legion's own volley back at them. After the battle, the pilum shafts could be easily repaired by the legion's armorers. If a pilum misses a shielded target by 1 or 2 on a d20, it has





## New Weapons

Item	Cost	Wt. (lbs)	Size	Type	Speed	Damage		RoF	S	Range		
						S-M	L			M	L	
Cestus	5 d.	2	S	S	2	1d4	1d3	—	—	—	—	—
Iaculum	31 d.	10	M	—	10	—	—	*	1	2	3	
Pilum	5 d.	3	M	P	5	1d6	1d6	1	2	3	5	

All of the above are for one-handed use.

\* User hangs onto it while throwing; may use as often as his level dictates for a melee.

stuck in the shield. The shield is useless (no longer providing any Armor Class bonus) until the pilum is removed. Trying to remove a pilum from a shield requires a successful Strength check, with a –4 penalty. This takes one melee round per attempt, during which time the character can do nothing else. Costs 10 denarii, weighs 3 lbs.

**Fuxina:** A trident. It was used by the retiarius class of gladiator and by fishermen.

**Iaculum:** A gladiator's net, eight to 12 feet across and weighted for throwing, used by retiarius gladiators. If a gladiator hits with a net, his foe is trapped and cannot move or attack (but the net is now useless). Making an escape attempt takes one round, and the netted character must roll a successful Strength check to free himself. A net has other special abilities: see *The Complete Fighter's Handbook*, page 99.

**Cestus:** A spiked, sharp-edged fighting glove. Gladiators sometimes wore one on either hand and engaged in a lethal version of boxing. Using a cestus does not require a weapon proficiency, therefore specialization in cestus costs only one proficiency slot.

**Other Melee Weapons:** Clubs, daggers, knives, hand axes, spears, and javelins were easily available. Javelins were often wielded by Roman auxiliary cavalry and lightly equipped foot. Most soldiers and many civilians carried daggers. Clubs were favored for street fights. Spears, knives, javelins, and axes were also available as tools and hunting weapons.

**Bows and Slings:** The Romans were not skilled archers, but the legions employed foreign auxiliaries skilled in the use of short bows, composite short bows, or slings.

## Roman Armor

**Bronze Breastplate and Greaves:** A partial suit of bronze plate worn by Roman soldiers until about 300 B.C.. From then on, only military tribunes and higher ranks used it. The breastplate is often ornamented. It provides AC 6 (AC 5 with shield). It costs 1,600

denarii and weighs 33.75 lbs.

**Lorica Hamata:** This suit of partial chain mail was the standard for members of a legionary army from the Punic Wars to the mid 1st-century A.D. It consists of a chain mail shirt and a studded leather skirt. It gives the wearer AC 7 (AC 6 with shield). It costs 256 denarii and weighs 26 lbs.

**Lorica Segmenta:** This light and flexible suit of partial banded armor was introduced at the end of the Republic and remained in use until 350 A.D. It consists of a breastplate of banded mail and a studded leather skirt. It gives the wearer AC 6 (AC 5 with shield). It costs 640 denarii and weighs 23.5 lbs.

**Thracian Armor:** This was used by gladiators. It consists of leather bands on the legs. It is AC 9, costs 64 denarii and weighs 5 lbs.

**Gallic Armor:** This was also used by gladiators. It is a protective metal belt, a gladiator helmet, a leather sleeve on one arm, and leather bands on the legs. It is AC 7, or AC 6 with shield, costs 172 denarii and weighs 20 lbs.

**Samnite Armor:** This was used by gladiators. It is a bronze cuirass, leather bands on the legs, a leather sleeve on one arm, and the visored gladiator helmet. It provides AC 5, or AC 4 with shield. It costs 432 denarii and weighs 30 lbs.

**Legionary Helmets:** These are pot-shaped crested helmets with attached face guards, but no visor. A variety of crest and face guard designs were used at different periods. They count as normal open-faced helmets. (Early legionaries and officers often wore Greek-style crested helmets.) Helmets cost 32 denarii and weigh 4 lbs.

**Gladiator Helmets:** These are heavy bronze helmets with complex visored faceguards. There were two normal types—the *mirmillo* (shaped like a fish) and the *galeo* (a more normal visored pot helmet). They are closed-face helmets, costing 64 denarii and weighing 5 lbs.

**Clipei or Parma Shields:** These are small round shields. The clipei were carried by Roman cavalry





and legionaries before circa 100 B.C. The parma were used by light infantry and some gladiators. Treat both as small shields.

**Scutum Shields:** Used by legionaries after circa 100 B.C. During the Republic they were oval in pattern, but sometime in the first century A.D. they evolved into a curved rectangular shape. A scutum was built up from several layers of leather and wood, and decorated with the legion's insignia. Treat it as a medium shield.

**Other Types of Armor:** Leather armor was often worn by auxiliary troops. Scale mail ("lorica squamata") was commonly worn by auxiliary cavalry.

## Armor

Type	AC	Cost (denarii)	Wt. (lbs.)
Br. Breast plate and Greaves	6	1,600	33.75
Lorica Hamata	7	256	26
Lorica Segmenta	6	640	23.5
Throccian	9	64	5
Gallic	7	172	20
Samnite	5	432	30
Legionary Helmet	—	32	4
Gladiator Helmet	—	64	5

## Roman Artillery

Roman legions often carried light artillery with them, or they assembled it during sieges. Statistics for common types are as follows:

**Scorpion:** A light, bolt-throwing catapult used in sieges or as field artillery.

**Ballista:** A heavier bolt-thrower, used in sieges.

**Onager:** A light, stone-throwing catapult used by Imperial armies. The name means "wild ass."

**Minimum Range:** This is the closest a target can be to the device; it reflects the arcing trajectory of the onager.

## Artillery

Device	Range		Crew		Rate of Fire	Target Type					
	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.		Hard Stone	Soft Stone	Earth	Thin Wood	Thick Wood	Massed Troops**
Scorpion	—	300 yd.	1	2	1/4*	2	3	4	10	5	2d4-4
Ballista	—	320 yd.	2	4	1/4*	4	8	5	17	9	2d6-4
Orager	150 yd.	300 yd.	4	6	1/4	8	11	10	20	13	2d10-6

\* A ballista or scorpion with maximum crew can fire 1/2 rounds.

\*\* Number of troops in *tight* formations killed outright. See also *DUNGEON MASTER*™ Guide, p. 76, for more information on target types.

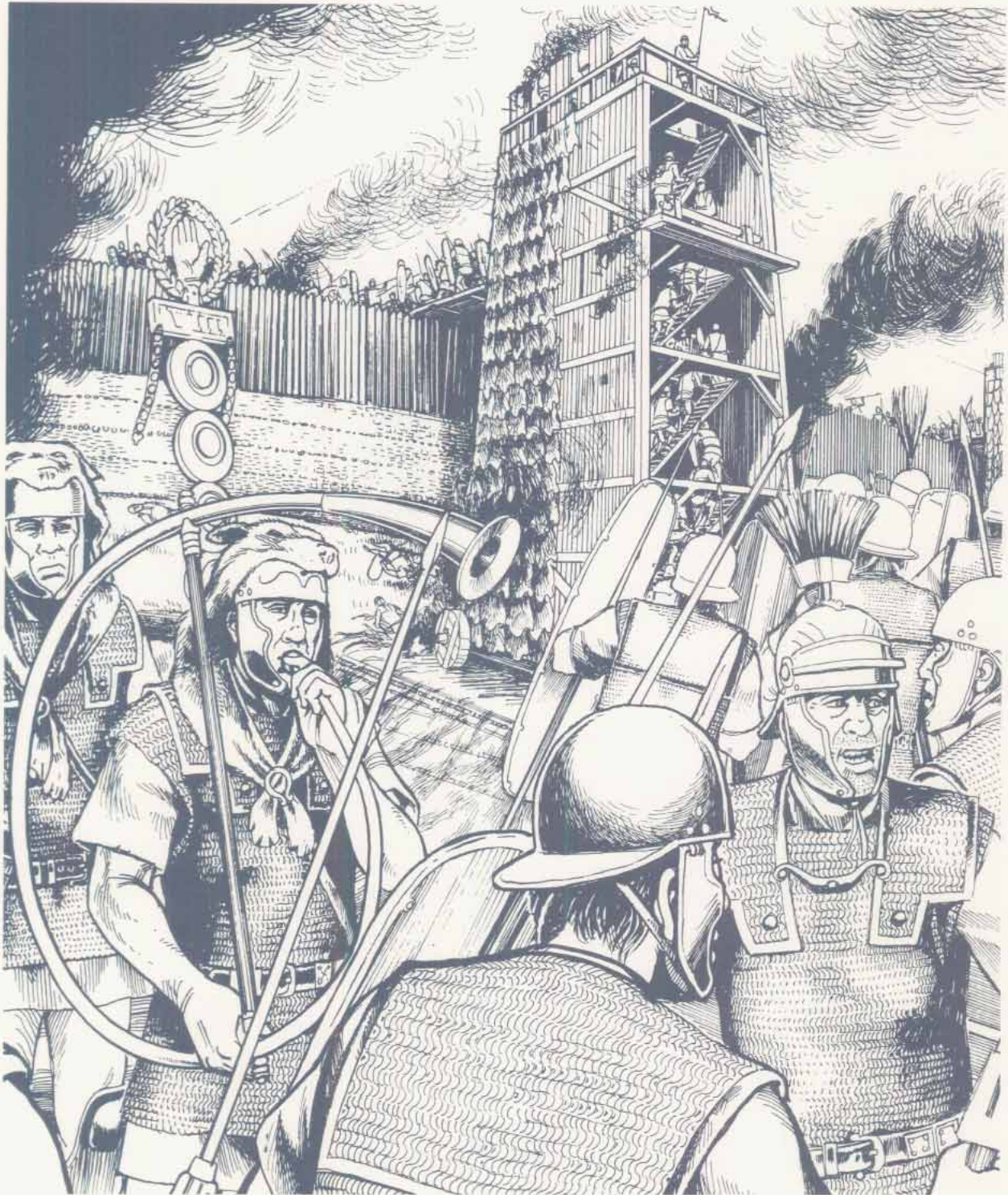


**Rate of Fire:** This is the speed of firing with minimum crew. If crew is less than the minimum, the rate of fire is halved.

## Treasure

Treasure in the Roman world can range from gold bars and Greek statues to exotic slaves or priceless parchment roll "books," since Rome could draw upon not only its own arts and crafts but also the loot of its conquered foes and client states.









*"We find the Romans owed the conquest of the world to no other cause than continual military training, exact observance of discipline in their camps, and unwearied cultivation of the arts of war."*

—Vegetius

The legionary is the symbol and substance of the might of Rome. The Roman army began as a citizen's militia, but it evolved into the most competent military machine of the ancient world. The legions expanded Rome's territory and influence, spreading Roman culture throughout the known world. By the end of the 1st century A.D., the wars of conquest ground to a slow halt. Rome had absorbed all she could. The legions then stood on the defensive, guarding a chain of fortresses along the frontiers and maintaining the Pax Romanum—the Roman peace—within the Empire's far-flung territory. Often outnumbered but rarely outfought, the Roman legionary was a career soldier who won his victories through superior training and sheer professionalism.

The early legions consisted of a levy of citizens who could afford their own arms and armor. Anyone with 11,000 asses or more in property was eligible for the draft, and this meant that most soldiers were minor landholders. But Rome was embroiled in constant foreign warfare during the 2nd century B.C. The Punic Wars and Macedonian Wars gave it an overseas empire, but even in times of relative peace, the empire required a garrison of legions to hold it. The average term a draftee served increased to over six years. This meant the decimation of the class of small landholders, for a farmer who was away for years fighting guerrillas in Spain could not keep his farm free of debt!

As a result, the property qualifications for service were gradually lowered throughout the 2nd century B.C. until they were virtually eliminated by the reformist politician-general Marius. Starting in 107 B.C., Marius recruited his soldiers by paying for the arms of any free citizen who volunteered, whether he was a well-off farmer or a propertyless urban laborer. But in order to attract volunteers, Marius and other Roman generals—usually provincial governors—had to offer them rewards, such as higher pay or land grants. This meant that the legion's loyalty went to their own generals rather than to Rome, which ultimately resulted in the civil wars that dissolved the Republic. When Augustus became the first emperor, he streamlined the number of legions to two dozen, totally eliminated the draft, standardized the length of service at 20 years, and most importantly, made recruitment, payment, and final

reward the sole responsibility of the state. Rome now had a fully professional standing army whose first loyalty was to its emperor. From then on, the army usually only became involved in civil wars when an emperor died heirless.

Coinciding with this social evolution was a tactical one. The Roman legion was a flexible armored infantry formation armed with sword and heavy javelin (pilum). When it first evolved during the early wars to unify Italy under Roman control (circa 320 B.C.), each legion was based around 35 well-trained *maniples* ("handfuls") of 120 men each. These deployed in a checkerboard fashion of three successive lines in such a way that each line could advance or retreat between the others, allowing a series of orderly attacks and withdrawals to be made instead of a single all-or-nothing charge.

As Rome gained military experience, changes were made in this organization. Native Roman cavalry and lightly-armed missile troops were few in number, so during the Second Punic War, Scipio Africanus recruited large numbers of foreign mercenaries. When Marius reformed the legions, he made these foreign missile troops and cavalry a permanent auxiliary to his troops. Similarly, Roman experience in Spain, Gaul, and Africa led to the gradual replacement of the maniples with the larger *cohort*, a unit of 360 to 480 men, a change also institutionalized by Marius. The cohort reduced the number of infantry units in a Roman legion from 35 to 10. A smaller number of units made it easier for a general to maneuver his legions, while the addition of auxiliaries made the legion a more balanced force. This "mature" Roman legion of ten cohorts plus auxiliaries, now largely made up of professional volunteers, was sufficient to win Caesar his great victories in Gaul. This organization was retained in the Imperial army until the foot soldier was overshadowed by the rise of barbarian heavy cavalry in the twilight of the Empire.

## Legionaries

A typical legionary was a Roman citizen aged 17 to 40 years old. He was also something rare in the pre-gunpowder world: a long-service professional soldier.

**Recruitment:** Any free male Roman citizen aged 17 years or older could try to join the legions. Before 107 B.C., most legionaries were citizen draftees, called up to serve for an average term of six years, the maximum 16. Afterward, many were volunteers recruited by the agents of the general raising the army, and





they signed on for 16 years, swearing an oath of loyalty to their general. In the Imperial army, *all* soldiers were volunteers, and the oath of loyalty was to the emperor. Volunteers for the Imperial army also had to pass a medical examination and meet a height requirement (at least 5'8") and an interview that weeded out criminals, escaped slaves, and foreigners. If a person passed, he was enlisted.

A recruit who took the oath was assigned to serve in a specific legion, cohort, and century. Many recruiting centers were far from the legion's headquarters, so a band of new recruits (under an officer) might require several day's or week's march, sometimes through dangerous territory, to arrive. Upon arrival, a new recruit was assigned to a squad of ten men who shared a single tent, and his training as a legionary began.

**Training:** Like modern soldiers, legionaries trained constantly. New recruits received exhaustive training that turned out skilled and disciplined fighters. They were taught to march in step and relentlessly drilled to change their formation in quick and orderly fashion, so each cohort would react as a single entity rather than a mob of individuals. Soldiers fenced

with wooden swords, threw javelins at targets, and marched constantly to toughen their bodies. They also swam, jumped, and practiced the rapid construction of fortified camps and siege engines.

**Quality:** With good officers, one legionary could be confident he was the equal of ten barbarians! Legionary soldiers serving prior to the 1st century B.C. are 0-level troops with Morale 12. Most legions from the 1st century B.C. to the 3rd century A.D. are 1st level with Morale 13. Veterans who served under an exceptional general, such as Scipio Africanus, Marius, or Julius Caesar, are usually one level higher and Morale 14, due to their excellent training and the great deal of action they will have seen. Members of the first cohort of a late Republican or Imperial legion also add +1 to level and Morale. (The first cohort of the ten in the legion was a picked unit.)

## Arms and Armor

**Early Republican Legions:** Until circa 100 B.C., the soldiers in the front two ranks of the main body of a legion were called *principes* or *hastati*. They were protected by lorica hamata armor (partial chain



Roman legionaries, from 3rd Century B.C. to late 1st Century A.D.





mail), an open helmet, and a small round shield (clipei), wore a tunic, a soldier's cloak, and the caliga (hobnailed marching sandals), and were armed with a gladius (short sword) and a pair of pila (heavy javelins). The rear ranks of the legion, called *triarii*, had spears (hasta) instead of pila. Some new recruits were trained as light skirmishing troops (*velites*) and these wore leather armor and carried javelins instead of pila. The *ala*, a small body of cavalry (formed from equestrian soldiers) were equipped as *triarii* except they rode light unarmored warhorses and had no gladius.

**Late Republican Legions:** The reforms of Marius around 100 B.C. led to the legions becoming more homogenous. All troops were now equipped like the old *principes* or *hastati*, except the large oval scutum shield replaced the clipei. Cavalry and light troops were mostly replaced with foreign auxiliaries.

Legions also began making more use of artillery, such as ballistae.

**Imperial Legions:** From the 1st to 3rd centuries A.D., the scutum became rectangular rather than oval, and the lorica segmenta (partial banded mail) began to supplant (but not entirely replace) the lorica hamata. Otherwise, the equipment remained generally the same until well into the 3rd century A.D., although minor details of helmet design changed constantly.

**Late Imperial Legions:** In the 4th and 5th centuries, the traditional infantry legion was gradually supplanted by barbarian mercenary cavalry armed with long sword (*spatha*) and lance.

Soldiers in all periods usually carried 35 to 50 pounds of gear. Besides their arms and armor, this consisted of a bundle of 17 days' rations, entrenching tools, spare clothes, and a mess kit.

## Officers and Organization

Sixty to 100 men made up a *century*, led by a centurion and assisted by a senior *principales* known as an *optios*.

In the early Republican legion, two centuries made up a *maniple*, and 35 maniples made up a legion. In the late Republican and Imperial legion, six centuries made up a *cohort* of 360–600 men. There were ten cohorts per *legion*. The first cohort was double strength and served as the legion's elite unit.

The number of legions in the Republic ranged from four to 60—the latter during the civil wars. The Empire maintained two dozen legions (about 150,000 men), each with its own title, number, and traditions. Legions were often named for areas they first served in—for example, I Germanica, V Macedonica, or IX

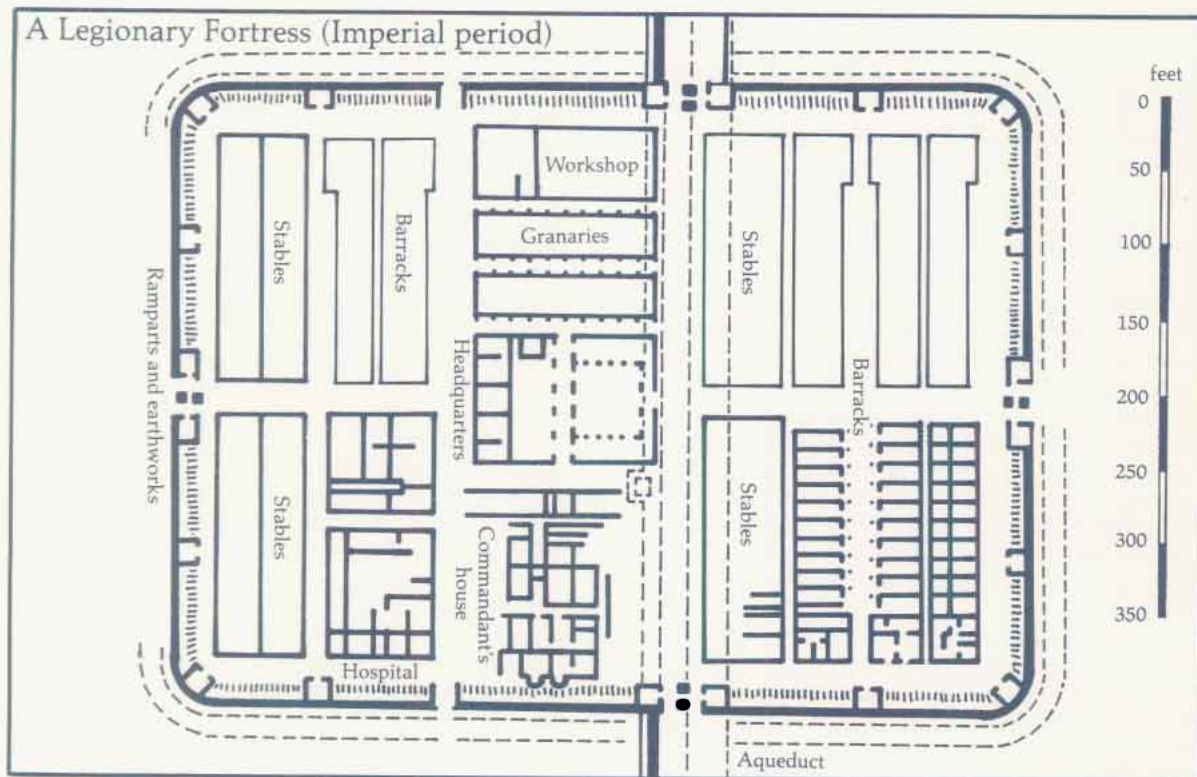
Hispania. Some legions had more exotic titles—X Fretensis, descended from Caesar's elite veterans, or XX Valeria Victrix, which fought in Spain, Germany, and then held Britain until the end of the Empire. Gemina was another common title, indicating a legion that recruited from another—X Gemina, whose parent was the Xth legion.

Two elite formations also existed during the Empire. These were urban cohorts (Rome's city guard) and the praetorian guard (the emperor's bodyguard). They were equipped as regular legionaries but were mostly used to police Rome and Italy. The praetorian also had a political role—this is discussed in the "Roman Culture" chapter.

**Noncommissioned Officers:** A ten-man squad was led by a promoted legionary called a *principales* (sometimes a *decurion*). He was similar to a modern corporal and would handle day-to-day discipline. An experienced *principales* was promoted to *optios* (similar to sergeant) to act as deputy commander of a century. *aquilifers* were the legion's standard bearers. After Marius's reforms, the first cohort of each legion had a standard topped with a silver eagle. A legion's eagle—the *aquila*—was its soul, and the soldiers would fight harder to prevent it being dishonored by retreat or—more shamefully—by capture. The *aquilifer* wore a bearskin over his armor. *Beneficiarii* were ex-*optios* or ex-*principales* who were excused from normal duties to serve as orderlies for senior officers, as well as soldiers with special skills (e.g., medical training). Most NCOs are one level higher than normal legionaries.

**Centurions:** These were the legion's professional officer corps. One centurion commanded each century. Most were 30–40 year old legionaries who had been promoted through the ranks for ability; a few (in Imperial times) were equestrians. In the late Republican and Imperial legions, the first century in a cohort was commanded by a centurion called the *pilus prior*, who acted as that cohort's second-in-command. The centurions of the double-strength first cohort were all senior centurions, called the *primi ordini*. The commander of the first century of the first cohort was the *primus pilus* (first spear), the legion's third-in-command and the highest rank a common plebeian soldier could reach. Most centurions are 3rd- to 5th-level fighters. A *pilus prior* or *primi ordini* is 5th to 7th level. As the *primus pilus* is the top fighter in the legion, and there are only 20 to 30 legions in the Empire, he is one of the best soldiers in the known world and at least 8th level. A centurion had a red cloak and carried a vinewood cudgel as a badge of office.





**Military Tribunes:** These did not work their way up through the ranks but were appointed directly as officers by the state. Most were young men from the senatorial or equestrian orders. During the Republic, military tribunes might have a variety of jobs: commanding cavalry units, acting as general's staff officers, or serving as individual cohort commanders. In Imperial times, a military tribune was placed in command of each cohort, but a smart tribune knew he didn't know as much about soldiering as his long-serving pilus prior, and he listened to the centurion's advice! Tribunes wore Greek-style helmets and engraved partial bronze plate armor instead of normal equipment. As political appointees, they received no pay.

**Generals:** A Republican army was commanded by a senior politician rather than a professional soldier, although sometimes the distinction was very slight. Praetors, propraetors, consuls, proconsuls, and dictators (see the "Roman Culture" chapter) were all elected magistrates who acted as army generals. If an army consisted of more than one legion, the politician appointed someone (normally an experienced senator and friend) as a *legate* to command each legion under him. During the Empire, the position of legate as legionary commander became an Imperial appointment.

Generals usually had the same equipment as tribunes. Most had a private "praetorian" bodyguard (often drawn from the first cohort of their best legion).

## Honor and Dishonor

**The Triumph:** A victorious Roman general's greatest honor was to be hailed as *imperator* by his legions on the field of battle, which meant they believed him to be a great commander. A general whose troops so honored him could petition the senate to allow him to hold a *triumph*—a military parade through the streets of Rome. Any general who won a great victory expected a triumph, but the senate had to vote and was not obligated to grant one. (However, snubbing a general was a great offense against his *dignitas*.)

The triumphant general, clad in purple, rode in a special chariot, accompanied by a slave whose role was to remind him of his mortality. He was escorted by his legions, captives, trophies (the armor of enemy leaders), and booty in a procession that wound from the Campus Martius outside the walls, past the cheering masses of Rome, to the temple of Jupiter in the center of the city. There he gave sacri-





fice to the gods for his victory. *Imperator*, not incidentally, is the root of emperor. During Imperial times, emperors were wary of granting triumphs to generals who proved too popular with their legions, and who might develop imperial ambitions of their own.

*The Crowns:* An ordinary soldier, or even an officer, couldn't hope for a triumph. That was reserved for legates, consuls, and other magistrates with imperium who actually commanded an army. Besides a share of the booty, Romans rewarded ordinary legionaries, centurions, and tribunes who showed exceptional bravery or skill with *coronas*, or crowns of valor. These served as decorations. Awarding of crowns was usually at the discretion of the senior centurions and tribunes, not the commanding general.

The Grass Crown, made from grass taken from the battlefield, went to a man (usually only an officer or a general) whose actions saved an entire legion.

The Civic Crown, made of oak leaves, went to a man whose actions saved the lives of fellow soldiers (usually a squad or century) in a desperate situation.

The Gold Crowns, which went by several names, were awarded to any soldier or officer who was either first man over the walls when storming a besieged city or fortress, or who showed outstanding valor in a land or naval battle.

Having won one or more crowns is worth a permanent reaction bonus from any Roman citizen: +1 for a Gold Crown, +2 for a Civic Crown, and +3 for a Grass Crown. Double the bonus if the person reacting to the character was a witness to the character's actions.

*The Yoke:* A yoke used to pull oxen was a symbol of submission in Rome. The legions traditionally forced defeated foes to pass under a symbolic yoke formed from two spears planted upright with a third placed across it. The yoke was low enough that a person would have to bow his head to go through. This custom was adopted by some of Rome's enemies. Every so often, a Roman army or the populace of a defeated Roman city was forced to pass under a yoke. Anyone who chose to surrender under these circumstances would be disgraced in the eyes of Romans and would suffer a -3 reaction penalty until he had somehow cleansed his stained reputation.

## Army Life

Like all professional soldiers, legionaries spent most of their time in camp, interrupted by occasional bouts of campaigning. Rations were bread, porridge, and posca (a vinegary wine), supplemented by foraging.

*Garrison Duty:* Life consisted of duties, such as

cooking, foraging, cleaning weapons, training, and regular day-long marches. Some enterprising officers devoted their spare time to hunting down bandits, escaped slaves, rebel bands, or criminals—this kept the civilians in line and the troops out of trouble. Republican legions were quartered in local forts, towns or, camps, but there were no official army bases. During the Empire, a chain of fortresses was established along the frontiers. Each served as the permanent base for two to four legions who lived there between campaigns. Soldiers were prohibited from marrying, but the existence of permanent fortresses gave them the opportunity to unofficially raise a family. Each fortress supported a town of soldiers' dependents and civilian workers.

*Campaigns:* During a war or a revolt, life was less comfortable. A campaign consisted of gruelling marches to outmaneuver the enemy, sleepless nights spent on watch against surprise attack, and the occasional battle or siege. Sometimes individual cohorts, centuries, or even squads would be detached for dangerous patrols to pinpoint the enemy, protect a supply caravan, carry an urgent message, or track down and eliminate guerilla bands. More often soldiers did hard labor—building the famous Roman roads to facilitate the easy movement of troops and setting up fortified camps (*castra*) after a day's march.

*Castra:* A legionary camp was square or rectangular. Its plan was always the same. It was surrounded by a high earth rampart and a deep ditch, centered on the *praetorium* (general's tent) and the *via principalis* (main street) that ran past it. Next to the praetorium was the *tribunal*, a raised turf bank in which the general addressed his troops or administered justice. The praetorium was flanked by the tents of the general's bodyguard and the military tribunes, and by the headquarters of the paymasters and artillery. Legionaries were encamped by century in orderly groups of ten-man tents that ran along smaller streets at right angles to the *via principalis*. Guards were on duty night and day.

*Battles:* Most legionaries could expect to see combat sometime in their career—many times if they served under an aggressive leader, such as Julius Caesar. The officers told the troops the battle plan, so that they would be confident and know what to do. The legion normally fought in successive lines, with light troops in front and cavalry on the flank and rear. Melee was always preceded by a shower of pila. Roman tactics were sophisticated and included the use of reverse forces and flanking or enveloping maneuvers. The soldiers were trained to respond





quickly to horn and trumpet signals and to adopt special formations, such as the wedge (for assaults) and the tortoise (linking shields together to provide full overhead cover against missile fire). Because of its superior training and organization, a Roman force could often defeat ten times as many barbarians.

**Sieges:** All soldiers carried tools and were trained in the rapid construction of both defensive and offensive siege works, including ramparts, mines, siege towers, and engines, such as rams, catapults, and ballistae. Even so, a siege was very dangerous; being first up the ladder was an honor most soldiers tried to avoid! A successful assault on a town or fortress that failed to surrender usually ended in looting and the massacre of its inhabitants, with the few survivors sold into slavery.

**Pay and Discipline:** Military pay was five asses a day until about 50 B.C. when Caesar doubled the allowance to ten asses a day. A noncommissioned officer was given double pay. A centurion collected 15 times the pay of a legionary, or 30 times if he was in the first cohort! (The urban cohorts received 50% more pay, and the praetorian guards triple pay.) This

was reduced by deductions for clothing, rations, replacement of lost kits, burial insurance, and whatever the legion's clerks could think up; subtract 2d4 × 10% to cover this. Other expenses resulted because legionaries regularly bribed their principales to give them lighter duties or time off, and he bribed *his* superior officers to give other squads duties, such as long nighttime patrols, grave digging, or emptying latrines. A soldier had a choice of the worst details or losing half his pay! Even so, discipline was harshly enforced by the officers. A man who failed to perform his duties, caused trouble, or failed to show respect to officers would be beaten. Death befell anyone caught falling asleep on watch or deserting. A century or cohort that mutinied (not uncommon) or ran away (much rarer) might be *decimated*: a random ten percent of the men were executed.

**Demobilization:** After serving his time, a soldier could expect to spend another five years as a "veteran" (similar to today's army reserve), whereupon he would be awarded a small plot of land. This was often in a new Roman colony planted on a troubled frontier province with rebellious natives—perhaps



European barbarians; Germans and Celts





even in an area he had just helped conquer! A typical grant was mediocre farmland worth 1d4 year's pay—and the soldier might have to take up arms to defend it against rebels or border raiders. In Republican times the grant had to be approved by the senate. As senators didn't like to give away public land, this often led to tension between the provincial governors, who commanded disgruntled armies cheated of their due, and their rivals in the senate. During Imperial times, getting a land grant was much more likely, although not absolutely certain.

## Auxiliaries

In the late Republic and throughout the Empire, the Roman army made extensive use of foreign auxiliaries. They might be either natives allied with Rome against traditional tribal foes or professional mercenaries. During the Empire, service in the auxiliaries for 25 years was rewarded by Roman citizenship. Auxiliary cavalry received two-thirds the pay of a legionary, infantry one-third. During the 3rd century A.D., the auxiliaries gradually supplanted the legions, until eventually they merged with them.

Auxiliaries were usually missile troops, scouts, or cavalry. Infantry were organized in cohorts, cavalry in *ala* (squadrons), each 500–1,000 men strong. Many types of auxiliaries were used, including the following:

*Cretan archers* were professional mercenary bowmen: AC 10, short bow, dagger, 1st-level fighters, Morale 12.

*Numidian cavalry* from Africa, as described in the "Enemies" section later in this chapter.

*Balearic slingers* were famous mercenaries from the Balearic Isles near Spain: AC 9, sling, small shield, dagger, 1st-level fighters, Morale 12.

*Gallic and German cavalry*, as described in the "Enemies" section.

Auxiliaries were usually commanded by a tribune, assisted by a native officer.

## The Roman Navy

Romans were not famous seamen, but in the First Punic War, Rome created a navy capable of defeating the Carthaginians. Roman naval forces played an important role in the Civil Wars, and they remained in existence into Imperial times, operating against pirates. The navy consisted of oared galleys manned by legionaries who practiced ram-and-board tactics. One Roman innovation was the *corvus* (raven), a swinging spike used to pin an enemy vessel to facili-

tate boarding. Some vessels were also equipped with ballistae or other artillery.

## Enemies of Rome

The statistics in this section can be used either for enemies of Rome or for auxiliaries serving with Roman legions. Unless noted otherwise, foreign units have one 1st- to 2nd-level fighter per 20 warriors and one 2nd- to 4th-level fighter per 100 warriors. These are normally officers or nobles, who usually have the best arms.

### Gauls

These are Celtic warriors from Gaul. Their statistics can also be used for Celtic-influenced people from the Balkan regions, such as Ilyria, Dacia, etc. They were brave but undisciplined—the typical tactic was an ambush followed by a mad rush forward. Gauls found the best time to attack a Roman force was while it was pitching camp. The Gauls almost always attacked in a mad rush accompanied by showers of thrown javelins. They fought in a loose (dis)order, which gave them room to swing their swords.

They dressed in brightly-colored tunics and trousers. They usually had blond or red hair, which they wore long. They had mustaches but no beards. Chieftains wore winged helmets. A typical force of Gauls consisted of the following:

*50% Infantry*: 0 Level, Morale 10, no armor, medium oblong shield (AC 9), long sword, two javelins.

*40% Cavalry*: 0 Level, Morale 11, light warhorse, no armor, bronze helmet, medium shield (AC 9), long sword, two javelins.

*10% Archers*: 0 Level, Morale 10, no armor, short bow, dagger.

A force of Gauls may be accompanied by a druid (DM's discretion, but usually rare unless the soldiers are defending a druid stronghold).

In Caesar's time, the rank-and-file Gallic swords were poor quality—on any attack roll of 1, the sword bends out of shape. To use it again, the warrior must take a round to straighten it with his foot.

### Carthaginians

The African city-state of Carthage was Rome's arch-rival until its destruction at the close of the Third Punic War. The Carthaginians fought Rome for over a century. Under Hannibal they inflicted some of Rome's worst defeats—at Cannae (216 B.C.),





Numidian horseman, Carthaginian horseman, Iberian, Carthaginians



Rome's infantry was enveloped by Hannibal's cavalry and lost 80,000 men (including 178 senators)!

A native Carthaginian soldier normally came from one of the coastal cities and was of Phoenician origin. He was usually dark or olive skinned, with black hair. He fought in the Greek fashion, in a slow-moving square phalanx several men deep.

**Carthaginian Phalangite:** 0 Level, Morale 10, leather armor and large shield (AC 7), spear, short sword.

Most Carthaginian troops were mercenaries, however. A typical mixed force might consist of 30% Carthaginian phalangites, 25% Numidian cavalry, 30% Spanish infantry, and 15% Gallic cavalry. It has a 20% chance per 1,000 men of containing 1d4 African elephants, each ridden by a trainer (armed with a pike) and 1d4 archers. (For the trainer and archers, use the statistics for Numidian cavalry.) An elephant that loses more than 25% of its hit points or its trainer must roll a morale check. Failure means it runs away in a random direction, attacking anyone in path. Roman troops were used to fighting elephants, but less disciplined men may have to make a morale check to fight one.

## Spaniards

The ancient Spaniards were a Celtic people similar to the Gauls, but Romans considered them more civilized because of their contact with Greek and Phoenician traders. Spanish infantry were famous for their prowess, and they fought as mercenaries alongside the Carthaginians in the Punic Wars. During the 2nd Punic War, Spain was conquered, although periodic fierce rebellions kept the garrison legions busy until Imperial times.

**Spanish Infantry:** 0 Level, Morale 12, leather armor, medium shield (AC 7), long sword or short sword, 0-2 javelins.

Spanish blades were of high quality—the Romans adopted the Spanish short sword as the gladius.

## Germans

The Germanic warriors encountered by the Republic and early Empire were more primitive than Gauls. The classic Germans were tall, blond, and wore little clothing except a cloak. They fought in a





close-packed mass on foot, armed with javelins. German hosts were usually numerous but disorganized, but they made deadly guerilla warriors and fought constant skirmishes on the Roman frontier. A Roman army could usually defeat several times its number in Germans, but there were exceptions. Caught by surprise when an allied German chief turned traitor, Legions XVII, XVIII, and XIX were ambushed and destroyed in A.D. 9 in the Teutoburger forest, wiping out nearly an eighth of Rome's entire strength.

**90% Infantry:** 0 Level, Morale 11, no armor, medium shield (AC 9), long sword, two javelins. Infantry often fought running alongside the cavalry.

**10% Cavalry:** 1st Level, Morale 11, light warhorse, no armor, bronze helmet, medium shield (AC 9), long sword, two javelins.

## Numidians

Numidian light cavalymen were famed throughout the ancient world for their superb riding skills,

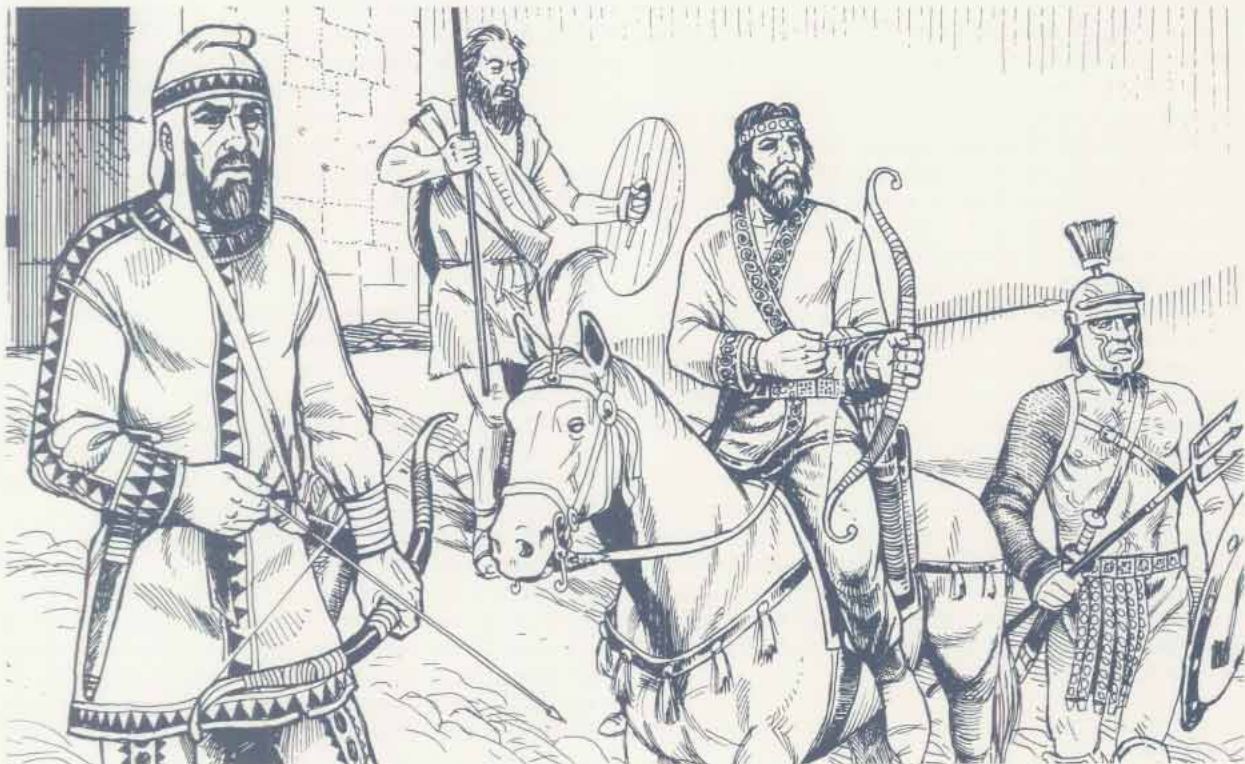
although they used neither bridle nor saddle. They were recruited from tribes who lived a semi-nomadic existence in the interior of Africa. The Gaetuli and Garamantes were two such tribes. They preferred to use hit-and-run guerilla tactics.

Numidians first fought Rome as Carthaginian mercenaries during the Punic Wars. Under their king, Jugurtha, they ran rings around the Romans until Gaius Marius led a reorganized legion against Africa. Some Numidians served as auxiliaries with the legions, but guerilla warfare persisted for centuries afterward.

Numidians have normal African features and dress in flowing robes.

**Numidian Cavalry:** 1st Level, Morale 12, light warhorse, no armor or shield (AC 10), four javelins or short bow, long sword.

When in the desert, Numidian cavalry can move very silently (especially since their unbridled horses make less noise): add +1 to their chance of surprising another party.



Persian bowman, Jewish zealot, Parthian, escaped gladiator.





## Britons

Caesar made a brief armed reconnaissance of Britain during his Gallic War, but the true Roman invasion did not occur until A.D. 43, in Claudius's reign. The British were restive subjects who rebelled several times, notably under Queen Boadicea in A.D. 61.

A typical Briton had blond, brown, or red hair with whiskers and mustache. He wore checkered trousers and a bright tunic.

**45% Light Infantry:** 0 Level, Morale 9, no armor, small shield (AC 9), sling or two javelins, dagger.

**20% Medium Infantry:** 0 Level, Morale 9, long sword, medium shield.

**20% Light Cavalry:** 0 Level, Morale 10, light warhorse, no armor, bronze helmet, medium shield (AC 9), long sword, two javelins.

**15% Charioteers:** 1st Level, Morale 11, war chariot with two horses, one charioteer with dagger, one with spear, medium shield, and two javelins.

## Rebel Slaves

Major slave revolts took place three times in Republican history. The first began in 135 B.C. on a large farm in the city of Enna in Sicily, led by an abused slave named Eunus of Syria. It turned into the First Servile War and spread to 70,000 slaves before a Roman army crushed it in 132 B.C. The Second Servile War took place under similar circumstances in Sicily from 104 to 101 B.C. The Third Servile War was led by the gladiator Spartacus in 73 B.C. in Italy. Spartacus's forces defeated several Roman armies sent against him before being cornered and destroyed by Crassus's legions in 71 B.C.

Renegade slaves are normally armed with stolen Roman or gladiatorial equipment: 40% are armed as gladiators, 40% as Roman legionaries, and 20% with improvised weapons, such as clubs.

Ex-slaves are eager to pay back their former owners and seize any chance to loot and pillage wealthy farms and villas. An army of slaves often has several wagons filled with stolen loot (type A treasure). Most are normal farm or mine slaves (0 level), but for every 100 slaves there is one 1st- to 4th-level ex-gladiator and one 5th- to 8th-level ex-gladiator. Slaves are Morale 12.

## Parthians

The Parthians were perhaps Rome's most persistent and dangerous foe. They were the equal of

Romans on a field of battle, with victory going to the best general. Parthians dressed in a loose, patterned jacket and baggy trousers, with a sweat band around their head.

**70% Light Cavalry:** 0 Level, Morale 12, light warhorse, no armor or shield (AC 10), short composite bow, dagger.

**30% Noble Cavalry:** 1st Level, Morale 13, medium lance and horseman's mace, full suits of elaborately decorated scale mail with conical helmets but no shield (AC 5), and cloaks. They ride medium warhorses with partial bronze barding (AC 7).

Since their forces were all mounted, Parthians were highly mobile. A favorite tactic was to fake retreats to lure the Romans into open country. They would send volleys of arrows into the enemy, riding back just out of reach to avoid a charge. This was the "Parthian shot" (corrupted into today's "parting shot"). Parthians always carried a large supply of arrows, with spare arrows in supply trains behind the lines.

Parthian horse archers could not stand up to Roman legionaries if the infantry managed to close with them. Another disadvantage was that their lack of engineering skills meant that a well-defended fortified camp could keep them at bay—provided the provisions and water held out.

In the late stages of the Empire, the Sassanid Persian Empire replaced the Kingdom of the Parthians, but their forces were similar.

## Jewish Zealots

Judaea rose against Roman rule in a series of bloody revolts during the 1st century A.D. A typical Jewish soldier wore no armor and dressed in a colorful woolen tunic, cloak, and sandals.

**40% Light Infantry:** 0 Level, Morale 14, no armor, medium shield (AC 9), short sword, two javelins.

**40% Archers:** 0 Level, Morale 14, no armor or shield (AC 10), composite bow, short sword.

**20% Elite Zealots:** 1st Level, Morale 15, scale mail, medium shield (AC 5), short sword.

The Jewish rebels were religious zealots who would die rather than surrender. They were most successful when mounting guerilla raids. Judaea had several large fortresses (e.g., Jerusalem, Massada) in which the rebels could hold out, but Roman engineering techniques and siege artillery made resistance ultimately hopeless. A band of Jewish zealots may have Jewish priest or rabbi characters with them.





## Beasts and Monsters

The educated Romans had a strong streak of practicality. Although a Roman would scoff at tales of a man turning into a wolf, he could believe stories of basilisks or giant multiheaded sea serpents that inhabited distant lands. After all, elephants and chameleons are fantastic creatures, yet they exist. Most Roman monsters, then, are denizens of barbarian kingdoms far from settled Italy. Their appearance in the campaign should be a very special event. An encounter with a true monster, such as a dragon or catoblepas, should be an occasion of great awe and terror. Perhaps a nameless man-eating beast destined for the arena escapes into the city, and the characters are sent to track it down. Or maybe a wealthy senator (or the emperor!) is obsessed with finding a particular beast, either for the arena or because one of its organs is needed for a healing potion to cure an ailment he suffers from.

*Humanoids and Demihumans:* Nonhumans should be even rarer than monsters. The best way to introduce nonhuman races is for Roman explorers,



traders, or soldiers to come upon a "lost race" or "lost city." Merchants or legionaries exploring Africa could hear rumors of hairy pygmies living in burrows underground who have a reputation as skilled craftsmen and cooks. When they investigate, the pygmies turn out to be a tribe of halflings. Or a lone nonhuman might turn up in a slave market, sparking an adventure that could lead to the rest of his people.

*Undead:* It was believed that ghosts, spectres and other undead existed. On the days of 9–13 May, kinless and hungry ghosts who had no one to perform funeral rites for them prowled about in search of prey. These ghosts were called manes or lemures, and a special festival, the Lemuria, was invoked to get rid of them. There are stories of entire towns that forgot these rites—perhaps because they were involved in war or other events. Ovid tells how once upon a time the great feast of the dead was not observed and the manes failed to receive the customary gifts. The injured spirits revenged themselves on the living and soon the city was encircled with the funeral fires of their victims. Lemures fit





the AD&D® game descriptions of wraiths and spectres. Greeks also believed in vampires (use oriental vampire statistics) and some of that belief carried over to Rome.

## Normal Animals

Most terrestrial animals native to Europe and Africa can be found somewhere in the Roman world. Medium warhorses, however, are rare, and heavy warhorses nonexistent. Exotic beasts, like lions, leopards, and even rhinos were brought to Rome to fight in the arena.

## Legendary and Fantastic Creatures

This section draws on the *Natural History* written by Pliny in the early years of the Empire. Pliny's bestiary includes several monsters that he and other educated Romans believed existed. Some of these are traditional AD&D® game monsters. Others, such as the Roman basilisk, are similar in name but different in detail.

Pliny, like most ancient authors, did not conduct

field research—instead he used older works or travelers' tales of dubious reliability. Of course, following up these rumors, capturing any of these beasts, and bringing them back to Rome to fight in the arena would make any character's reputation!

**Basilisk:** These lived in desert wastelands in Africa. Treat them as normal basilisks, except they are legless and shaped like a giant hooded cobra. Their glance or touch struck people dead rather than turning them to stone (successful saving throw vs. death magic or die, with a -2 penalty if touched). Their touch was so deadly that anyone hitting them with a melee weapon must roll a successful saving throw vs. poison, with a +2 bonus, or die! Most people try to stay out of an African basilisk's way, but Pliny writes that some curious kings commissioned basilisk-hunting parties.

**Catoblepas:** This horrible beast was believed to live at the fountain of Nigris at the source of the Nile, somewhere within darkest Africa. Its name means "downward-looking." It has identical characteristics to the AD&D game's catoblepas.

**Dragon:** The fire-breathing winged dragon was not known in Roman times. When a Roman referred to a dragon, he meant either a giant snake or a giant lizard. Giant lizards up to 24 feet long and covered in yellow, purple, or royal blue scales were reported in India.

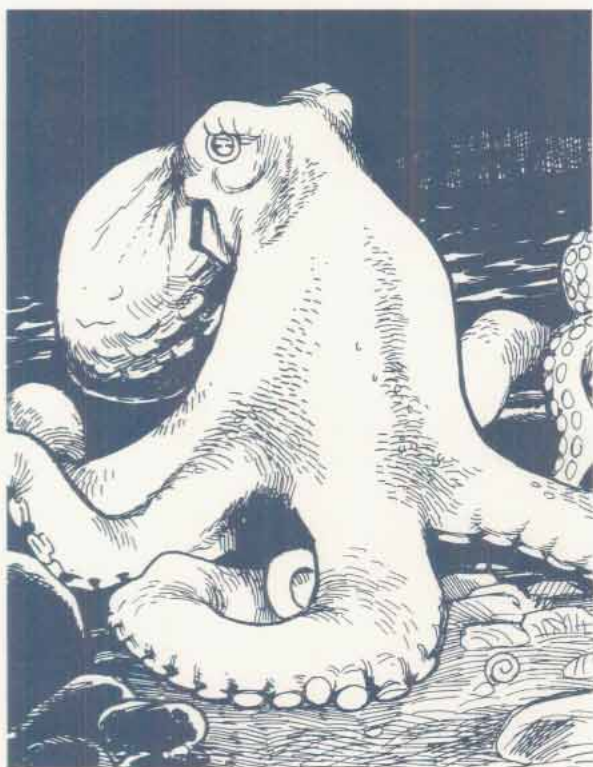
**Fire Snake:** These creatures were known as salamanders. The adult elemental form was not known to Romans.

**Gnoll:** Dog- and hyena-headed humanoids were thought to live in unexplored regions of India, as were other exotic races.

**Griffon:** Griffons were believed to live in a mountain range somewhere in Asia Minor. They were known for their fondness for gold and were said to fight battles with the natives for control of gold mines.

**Lemure:** These were the hungry ghosts of people who died kinless and alone. On 9–13 May—"the feast of Lemures"—they prowled around houses. If people forgot to leave out ritual offerings of food for them, they would attack. Treat them as wights, wraiths, or shadows, except they do not create other undead, and they materialize only at night on May 9th through 13th. There is a 10% chance that 1d10 lemures attack any family or individual who has forgotten to make the proper offerings.

**Leech:** Pools of leeches were used by the most villainous equestrians or senators to execute slaves and personal foes.







*Leucrotta*: *Leucrotta* were known to live in Africa.

*Lynx, Giant*: Like normal lynxes, these creatures were found mainly in Africa. Every so often their urine was believed to crystallize into an amber-like precious stone, known as lyncurium, which could shine like fire. Lyncurium was very valuable (1d20 × 100 gp) and might have magical properties. Lynxes were well aware of the gem's value, and they always buried their urine. The production of lyncurium may have been limited to specific times (e.g., during mating season). A hunter would have to surprise a lynx at the right moment in order to find the lyncurium before it was buried, or else he would have to dig up a lynx lair. This was tricky, since giant lynxes were very cunning and tried to lead hunters astray.

*Manticore*: Another African monster. They differed from the normal manticore only in having no tail spikes—their tail ends in a scorpion-like sting (1d8 points of damage, successful saving throw vs. poison or die). They ate human flesh but spoke with beautiful, flute-like voices.

*Merman, Nereid, and Triton*: Roman sailors often reported sighting these creatures.

*Octopus, Giant*: Pliny recorded that these creatures would come ashore and steal fish that fishermen had left out in pickling tubs to salt, even climbing trees to get past barriers. Treat them as amphibious octopi with a land movement of 3.

*Pegasus*: Pliny recorded rumors of herds of winged horses he called pegasi, which dwelled in the wilds of Ethiopia. He guessed they were related to sphinxes.

*Phoenix*: These fiery birds were believed to live in darkest Africa, perhaps near the source of the Nile.

*Porcupine*: All porcupines were believed to be able to throw their quills in the same manner as the giant porcupine. A small porcupine's quills cause 1-2 points of damage and have a range of 20 feet.

*Satyr and other Silvan Races*: Some satyrs, centaurs, and fauns might still survive in remote parts of Greece, but the Romans believed most of them had fled to more distant lands, such as India. Nymphs, sylphs, and dryads were very rare but could still exist.

*Snakes and Serpents*: Several exotic snakes were known in Roman times. The two-headed amphisbaena and the flying jaculus were rare but were reported in a variety of countries. Giant sea snakes (sea serpents) lived in all known oceans, not just tropical seas. Sailors often reported sighting them.

*Sphinx*: This monster was believed to be native

to Ethiopia—none had been seen in Egypt for centuries. The most common kind was the brown-haired female gynosphinx, but “many monstrous kinds of similar nature” were also reported, so criosphinxes and androsphinxes could be encountered as well.

*Unicorn*: According to Pliny, unicorns (“monoceros”) were found in India. They were very fierce and could not be taken alive.

*Werewolf*: Pliny stated that the Greeks believed in them, although he remained skeptical.

*Wolves, Evil-Eyed*: The most cunning Italian wolves were believed to have a magical gaze that could steal away a hunter's voice. There is a 1% chance any given wolf has this ability. If an evil-eyed wolf surprises a man and gazes into his eyes, he must roll a successful saving throw vs. petrification or he is struck dumb for 1d6 days. All wolves were sacred to Mars, but that didn't prevent Romans from hunting them if they got out of hand.

*Woodpecker, Martian*: Woodpeckers were just woodpeckers, but they were sacred to the god Mars. Seeing one was a good omen. Killing a woodpecker was thought to bring disaster!







## Caladrius

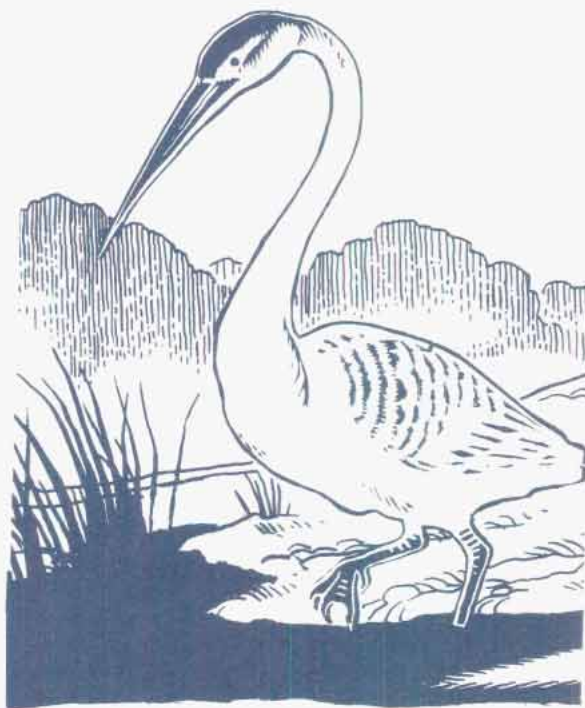
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Marsh
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Diurnal
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	None
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	9
MOVEMENT:	3, Fl 15 (D)
HIT DICE:	½
THACO:	20
NO OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1 point
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	None
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Immune to disease
SIZE:	S (3'–4')
MORALE:	Average (10)
XP VALUE:	7

The caladrius is a magical, pure white marsh bird the size of a heron. It possesses unusual healing powers that work on people with internal ailments, such as diseases of the liver. It may also be able to cure magical diseases.

When a caladrius is brought before a diseased person, the bird's reaction will determine whether the patient will recover. Roll reaction when the bird is within 5 feet. On a reaction of cautious, threatening, or hostile, the caladrius turns its head away from the patient: It will not cure him.

On an indifferent or friendly reaction, it stares at the patient for one round. The bird's pure white feathers will turn gray and unhealthy as it absorbs the sickness into itself. The person's sickness is cured and he or she feels better immediately, but the caladrius catches the disease! To recover, the caladrius must be allowed to fly off high into the air, where the sun's rays purify it. Unfortunately, the caladrius cannot be tamed, so this means it escapes.



**Combat:** Faced with people seeking to capture it, the caladrius tries to fly off. A caladrius is immune to *cause disease* spells.

**Habitat/Society:** These rare birds live in wetlands in distant parts of Italy. They feed on small fish, and are solitary except for a brief mating period.

**Ecology:** A captive caladrius is worth 500–1,500 g.p. – more if no priests in the area have magic capable of curing diseases. The mere rumor of a caladrius can summon scores of net-wielding hunters to an area! Captured birds are hooded and caged to prevent them from looking at the wrong patient. They dislike captivity, and cannot be trained, so when they fly off to purify themselves they rarely return to their owners. Luring them back requires imitating their mating calls, which can be accomplished by a successful Animal Lore check at a –10 penalty.



## The Games

The games, or *ludi*, were public entertainments that wealthy individuals or the state put on as part of their civic duty. The most popular events were chariot racing and gladiatorial combats. Both the circus and the arena can provide an excellent focus for an adventure or a whole campaign, especially for PCs designed using the Gladiator or Charioteer kits.

Originally the games were held on public holidays that marked religious festivals. They were paid for by the city in which they were held and were organized by city officials. In the city of Rome these were the aediles (in the Republic) or the praetors (in the Empire). At the beginning of each year, the senate would allocate money to the officials for the games, but officials often dipped into their own pockets to fund the games. After all, a lavish spectacle meant public acclaim—and a better chance at being re-elected to a more important office when their term was up. During the Empire, the most important games in Rome were financed and sponsored by the emperor, but city and local magistrates still arranged expensive games, hoping to win Imperial favor and enhance their own reputations.

During the Republic there were 58 days of public *ludi* taking place during six major celebrations in the city of Rome: the *Ludi Megalenses* (April 4-10), *Ludi Cereales* (April 12-19), *Ludi Florales* (April 28-May 3), *Ludi Apollinares* (July 6-13), *Ludi Romani* (September 5-19) and *Ludi Plebeii* (November 4-17). The number of *ludi* were doubled in Imperial times—bread and circuses kept the masses happy. Additional *ludi* celebrated famous military victories and Imperial birthdays. In addition, the Secular Games were held (more or less) every 100 years, starting at 348 B.C.

Tens of thousands of people (hundreds of thousands for major chariot racing events) would line up outside the place where the day's events were being held to pick up seat tickets. Admission was free, but street vendors plied the crowds selling refreshments, and last-minute bets were made. The largest circus race tracks or gladiatorial amphitheaters had several levels of seats, as well as standing room. The best tickets were for cushioned seats on the lower tiers, and were reserved for senators (or the Imperial household) and their guests. The circus's sponsor—a high-ranking magistrate or the Emperor—and his guests had a private central box of their own. The public games were not only entertainments, they were good places to meet and do business. Both men and women attended them for the company as well as the excitement. Because the

seats packed people closely together, the poet Ovid recommended them as a good place for lovestruck men and women to meet!

Wealthy individuals also put on their own games. These began as funeral games that were held to mark the passing of a member of a wealthy or powerful family. Funeral games were open to the public and served to increase the prestige of both the dead person and the man putting them on. By 100 B.C., the games had become more important than the funeral. If a wealthy man wanted to enhance his own fame, he might hold funeral games to commemorate a relative who had actually died several years ago. By the end of the Republic, games also celebrated personal military successes.

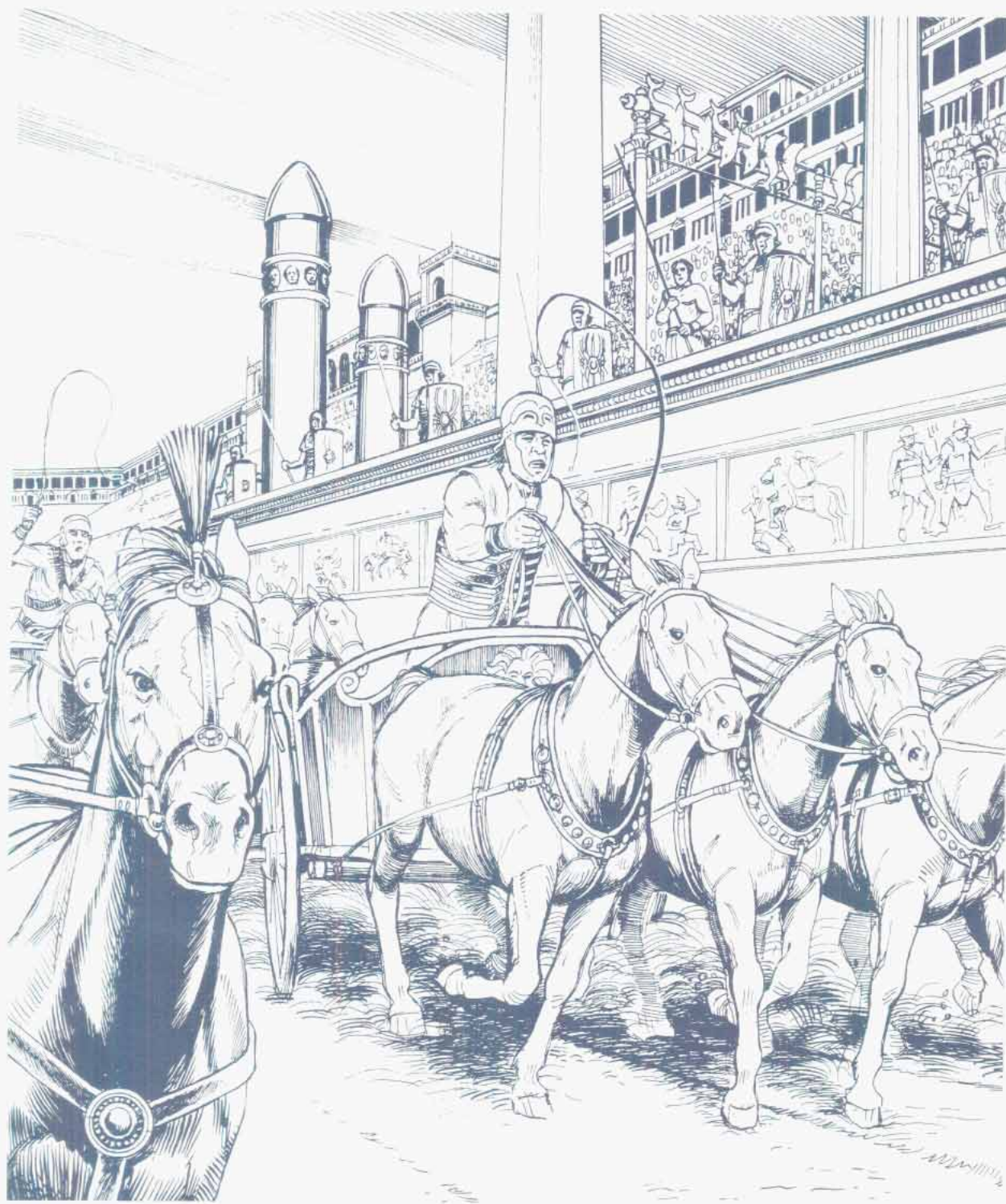
## The Circus

Chariot racing was the oldest and most popular public entertainment in Rome. It was a professional sport designed to make a profit for its organizers. There were four official racing companies, called "factions," each named for a color—the Whites, the Reds, the Blues, and the Greens. Each faction was controlled by businessmen who owned the chariots, stables, animals, grooms, and drivers. Chariot races took place at public *ludi*. The owners of each faction rented out the chariots and teams to the officials (aediles or praetors) responsible for organizing the games.

The charioteers were rarely citizens. Most were slaves, and the rest were foreigners or freedmen. Their contracts (and they themselves, if they were slaves) were owned by a particular faction, although like modern sports players, they could be sold or traded. Training began while the driver was a boy, and most began racing in their late teens. A successful charioteer with a few dozen victories would be a star with a huge fan following. He could expect to receive numerous small gifts from his admirers! Women would fall in love with him, poets would write verses about him, and he would be invited to dinner parties by senators and other wealthy citizens. If he was lucky, he might retire in his 30s or 40s wealthy enough to buy his freedom (if he were a slave) or live as a rich man (if he was free). But chariot racing was a dangerous profession: For every driver who had a successful career, several died on the race track or suffered crippling injuries and ended their lives in poverty and pain.

A chariot race track was called a circus. The major circus in the city of Rome was the Circus Maximus,









which could accommodate 250,000 seated people, with standing room for another 100,000 and a track 2,500 feet long and 250 feet wide. Other smaller circuses existed in Rome, and more proliferated during the Imperial period. By the first century A.D., Rome boasted a half dozen circuses, and most provincial cities had at least one.

Chariot races took place during the public ludi. People of all social circles attended the circus, from freedmen to senators. Emperors made a point of attending the races even if they weren't fans; the people expected it of them.

Excitement before a major set of races was intense. In the days before the games, everyone began to speculate which drivers would represent the factions. When the lineup was announced the betting began, on both individual drivers and on which faction would win the most races. Slaves, freedmen, commoners, senators—everyone put money on their favorites!

Races were held in the morning or the early afternoon. While the crowds poured into the circus and found their seats and chatted with friends, the charioteers and their grooms made their own last-minute preparations. The drivers put on their padded uniforms and helmets, made a final check of their vehicles and animals, and prayed to the gods for victory.

The races opened with a solemn procession into the circus and around the course. This was led by priests in carriages bearing statues of the state gods, especially those who were patrons of the horses and sports, such as Poseidon, Castor, and Pollux. The crowds cheered loudly as their favorite gods passed!

A circus race was either a single entry race with one chariot for each of the four factions, a double entry with two chariots per faction, or the rare triple entry race with three chariots per faction. The chariots began in starting boxes with grooms holding the heads and bridles of the horses, keeping them calm as they waited for the starting signal. Then a magistrate dropped a white cloth, there was a blare of trumpets, the stall doors opened, and the race was on!

The chariots were light, flimsy affairs, made of wood or wickerwork. Each carried one man, had two wheels and was drawn by four horses. The driver stood up on a narrow floorboard, urging his team to greater effort with whip blows against the horses' backs and shoulders. Clouds of dust soon filled the circus from the pounding hooves and grinding wheels, but each charioteer wore bright tunics dyed with his faction's color, so it was easy for the crowds to tell who was winning and cheer on their favorites!

The course ran counter-clockwise, circling a low wall in the center of the circus on which were mounted lap markers. As the leading racer completed each lap these were removed. In the Circus Maximus the markers were metal dolphins and marble eggs. A typical race was "seven dolphins"—a seven lap course, which covered about two and a half miles.

Each lap took about a minute to complete. At the top and bottom of the course the track narrowed, and only one or two of the chariots could safely pass through at once! Turns at either end were very sharp—180 degrees—and difficult to negotiate without hitting the wall or another chariot. Injuries and deaths from accidents were common, and debris from crashed chariots and injured horses created new obstacles to avoid! The most ruthless drivers deliberately used their whips on other charioteers, or tried to sideswipe their rivals to break wheels or panic horses. The final lap was the most tense, as the surviving chariots ran for the last lap marker. The first to pass it was the winner!

The victor received a palm branch from the sponsor of the games, who might be a consul or even the emperor himself. A large prize of money was also awarded, worth many thousand denarii, but it went to the owners of the winning faction rather than the charioteer. But it was customary for a winning charioteer to receive a gift of money from the faction's owner. This gift was equivalent to what a soldier or carpenter would receive in salary for several months. It meant that a successful enslaved charioteer could eventually purchase his freedom, and a free driver could retire wealthy after a few years of racing (if he lived that long!).

While the prize was being awarded, the preparations began for the next race. The arena was swept and washed by slaves, injured drivers and animals were carried off, new bets were made, and the animals and chariots were readied for the next race. Important games might run for up to 14 days with several races per day. An individual driver would usually race once or twice per day during a major festival. Unless he was injured, he could be involved in 50 or more races a year.

## Gaming a Chariot Race

A normal race has each of the four factions represented with either one, two, or three chariots per faction. In double or triple-entry events, drivers from the same faction worked as teams. One chariot might try





to run interference by ramming other chariots, while the other avoided damage and went for the win.

Each chariot has four horses and a single charioteer. The charioteers wear metal helmets and padded cloth armor (AC 9) under a tunic with their faction's color, and they carry a whip and a knife. No other weapons or armor are permitted.

Each lap takes one round to complete. At the start of a round, each driver rolls a proficiency check vs. his Charioteering skill, modified as shown later. The leading chariot for that lap is the one whose driver makes the highest successful roll, with the second highest in second place, and so on. Any chariot that fails a roll is automatically in last position. Chariots with equal success rolls are tied, running neck and neck for their position. If more than one chariot fails a roll, they are tied for last place.

Example: four chariots are racing, each with a modified proficiency score of 16. If the rolls are Blue 15, Red 12, White 12, and Green 17, then the result of the lap is Blue in first place, Red and White tied for second place, and Green in fourth.

*Modifiers:* On the second and subsequent laps, a driver has a penalty to his skill equal to twice his last lap's placement in the race after the winner. Being in second place is -2, third place is -4, fourth place is -6, and so on. Other modifiers: -3 per sick or drugged horse, -1 per chariot that has already crashed or been wrecked in this race (thanks to the debris), -2 if a driver's horses are panicked (see whip attacks, below), and -2 if a chariot has only 5 or fewer hit points remaining.

*Accidents:* If a driver rolls a 20, an accident takes place. The driver accidentally collided with the next slowest chariot (e.g., first place would collide with second place—if multiple chariots are equally close, roll randomly for the target). Treat this as a deliberate sideswipe attack, as below, but both drivers roll at -3 to skill because neither expected it. If the last-place driver has an accident, he crashes into the wall. The driver must roll against his Charioteering score. If he fails, his chariot suffers 1d8 points of damage; if he succeeds, his chariot receives 1d3 points of damage.

*Attacks:* These may be made only between chariots running neck and neck. A driver may choose not to attack, may make an attack with his whip, or may try to sideswipe. If both drivers decide to attack, make a normal combat initiative roll to see who goes first.

A whip attack is a normal melee attack made against a driver or horse. It inflicts normal damage; in addition, a hit on a horse panics it, so the driver's Charioteering skill is -2 on the next turn.

A sideswipe attack requires the attacking and defending drivers to both roll vs. their Charioteering skill scores. The defending driver has a -3 penalty. The highest roll that succeeds is the winner and inflicts 1d8 points of damage to the other chariot. If both drivers tie or fail, both chariots suffer 1d8 points of damage!

A chariot starts with 15 hit points. When reduced to 0 hit points, it is destroyed; see the next paragraph for the effects on chariot and driver.

*Wrecked Chariots:* If a chariot, horse, or driver is reduced to 0 hit points, the chariot crashes! Roll 1d6 for the effects: On a die roll of 1-3, the spokes or lynch pins on one wheel break and the chariot overturns! If the charioteer rolls a successful Dexterity check with a -4 penalty (or a Tumbling proficiency check with no penalty) he can jump free, suffering only 1d2 points of damage. If he fails, he is caught under the wheels of his own or another chariot and crushed, suffering 3d6 damage! On a roll of 4-6, his chariot's yoke has snapped, suddenly freeing the horses and—since charioteers wore the reins wrapped around their arm—jerking him off the chariot! The damaged chariot spins away, while he is dragged behind the panicked horses. The charioteer suffers 1d4 points of damage right away from the fall. If still conscious, he can draw a knife immediately and cut himself free—roll an attack vs. AC 6. Otherwise he is pulled along for another 1d3 rounds, suffering 1d4 points of damage each round.

When a chariot is wrecked, debris and wild horses make the track even more dangerous. Each time a chariot is wrecked or loses its driver, all further Charioteering rolls are rolled with a -1 penalty to skill for the rest of the race. This includes rolls for position and rolls made when sideswiping other chariots. Rolls for whip attacks or to jump from a damaged chariot are not affected.

*Victory:* The chariot in first place on the seventh lap wins! The prize purse amounts to 3d6 × 500 denarii in Rome, half that in smaller cities. Increase the prize by 50% in a double-entry race and by 100% in a triple-entry race. The gift given a winning charioteer is 1% of the prize money. In a tie, divide prize money equally. If a charioteer's teammates cooperated to help win a double or triple entry race (by ramming other chariots, and so on) each gets 25% of the winner's gift. The DM may want to raise the stakes in particularly important games (e.g., the Sectarian Games, or those held to celebrate the emperor's birthday, etc.) or in "grudge matches" in which especially skilled or ruthless drivers are rivals.





## Dirty Tricks at the Circus

Since people bet on the races and prizes were large, dirty tricks were common. Attempting to foil or perpetrate them can make for an interesting adventure even before the race is started. If a PC is a charioteer, a business partner in a faction, or is involved in gambling, he may become directly involved in the intrigue. Maybe a PC's father or an aristocratic patron has lost money and believes the games were fixed. Now he wants the characters to find the culprit and punish him!

Some of the underhanded tactics rival factions or gamblers might use to fix a race include bribing a groom or sneaking into the stables and drugging the horses. The trick is to make the animals weak, but not so sick that it is noticed before the race. If no one noticed the intruder's actions, making a drug to slow a horse requires a Herbalism check; failure may either have no effect, or may cause the horse to pass out or die. To successfully notice that animals are drugged, a proficiency check vs. Animal Lore should be made prior to the race. A drugged horse gives the charioteer a -3 penalty to his skill rolls.

Rival factions or charioteers often hired witches to curse animals or drivers. Since circus events often lasted several days, the PCs might have enough time to discover the nature of the curse and remove it, enabling a champion driver to recover in time for a climactic final race.

Sabotage of the chariot was just as common. The trick was to make sure the damage didn't show, since every faction had replacement chariots. A common ploy was to sneak in and replace the lynch pin of a wheel with a candle, which would hold for a few laps before breaking (it breaks on any Charioteering skill roll of 17-20, automatically causing loss of all the chariot's hit points, resulting in an immediate wreck and crash). To spot a sabotaged chariot, the driver should make a Charioteering check with a -5 penalty (no penalty if he's been warned of sabotage).

Charioteers were sometimes bribed by rival factions or gamblers to "throw" the race and deliberately lose. A bribe is usually about 10-20% of the value of the purse, or more if the driver is expected to win. A driver trying to throw a race suffers a -3 penalty to skill when rolling for position (but no penalty when checking to avoid accidents or collisions). Charioteers who can't be bribed might be blackmailed with threats to themselves or to their friends or lovers.

## The Arena

Gladiatorial combats where men or beasts battled each other to the death were a remnant of Rome's Etruscan heritage. For most of the Republic, they were held during privately-sponsored funeral games. Depending on the sponsor's wealth and power, the games might feature a single bout between two fighters, or several days' worth of engagements involving dozens of gladiators and wild animals. As Rome became richer, funeral games became more elaborate, featuring as many as several hundred gladiatorial bouts. Toward the end of the Republic (circa 50 B.C.), gladiatorial shows were so popular that they were staged without the excuse of a funeral. They became part of the regular state-run *ludi*. By Imperial times, great amphitheaters were erected to house gladiatorial events.

An amphitheater was a circular, open building ringed with several levels of seats and galleries. The mammoth Colosseum had four levels and housed 50,000 people. Beneath the amphitheater was an underground dungeon in which gladiators, condemned criminals, and animals were held before the show.

The largest was the Colosseum in Rome (actually called the Flavian Amphitheater), which enabled the staging of shows lasting several days and involving as many as 10,000 gladiators!

Gladiatorial combats were never as popular as circus races, with the largest spectacles attracting only 50,000 to 60,000 people, rather than the hundreds of thousands who attended the circus racing. Some Romans disapproved of these contests, but they still drew crowds of rabid fans. Their popularity waxed in the first and second centuries A.D. when, in imitation of Rome, most cities in the Empire built their own amphitheater, with city officials or patrons paying for them out of their own purses.

A full gladiatorial program in late Republican or in Imperial times would feature several types of events. It would start with animal events. Starving panthers, lions, and bulls were most common, but the sponsors of the games often tried to find exotic animals to delight the jaded crowds. These opening events might feature battles between the wild beasts, or between beasts and unarmed (or lightly armed) condemned criminals. "Comedy" battles were also held, involving unskilled prisoners, midgets, or women.

This was followed by an intermission. Sometimes floor prizes were distributed, ranging from food and drink tickets to valuable objects. During the intermission, theatrical skits, athletic performances, dances,





or animal acts might also take place.

Then, just as the crowds were getting rowdy, came the meat of the program—the gladiatorial contests! All the gladiators marched into the arena wearing purple tunics and gave the sponsor of the games the traditional salute: “Ave \_\_\_\_\_ Morituri te salutamus!” (The Emperor would be addressed “Ave Imperator!”) This meant “Hail \_\_\_\_\_ we who are about to die salute you.”

A typical fight took place between two gladiators with different gear. An armored man with sword and shield (a *mirmillo*) vs. an unarmored man with a net and trident (a *retiarius*) was traditional, although other combinations were used; see the Gladiator kit in Chapter 3: Characters for details. Teams of gladiators also fought. Other variations might be introduced in the quest for novel forms of bloodshed: free-for-alls, mock naval battles in which the arena was flooded and men fought from boats, battles between blindfolded warriors, and so on.

A wounded gladiator could surrender by pointing a finger upward. Assuming the other gladiator stepped back to give him a chance to surrender (most likely if he fought a man from his own gladiatorial company), the sponsor of the games would then listen to the crowd. If they thought he had fought well, they would shout their approval. The games sponsor would raise his thumb up, and the man would be spared. If they weren't impressed—or just felt bloodthirsty—they would scream for his death. The sponsor would point his thumb downward or toward his chest, and the man would be killed either by the gladiator or by arena attendants. The DM should decide the crowd's mood when player characters are in the arena, based on how bravely the PCs fought. For NPCs, a random reaction roll can be made, again with modifiers for bravery.

After a fight, armed attendants smashed the skulls of the fallen to make sure no one was feigning death and then carried them off. Meanwhile, the winner received a palm leaf of victory, and sometimes a prize of gold or jewelry (a good value in denarii is 2d4 times the XP of the foe defeated). The ultimate prize for an enslaved gladiator was the *rudis*, a wooden sword. It meant that the sponsor had been impressed enough to pay to have him freed!

The last arena combats were fought in the fourth century A.D. Christians despised gladiatorial combat, partly because of their sect's opposition to violence, and partly because so many Christians died in the arena. When the first Christian emperors came to power (beginning with Constantine), the combats lost

their official sanction. By circa 350 A.D., man-to-man arena combat became a thing of the past. Fights between armed men and animals were not as repulsive to Christians, however, so they remained popular. The Spanish bullfight is one survivor of this tradition.

## The Gladiators

Gladiators were named after the *gladius*, the short sword that was the basic Roman weapon. Like chariot-racing factions, gladiators worked for companies owned by wealthy magnates, often knights. In fact, gladiators were considered a very safe business investment! A gladiatorial school was called a *ludus*. It maintained a stable of trained gladiators who were rented to the sponsors of individual games. The day-to-day affairs within a *ludus* were run by its head trainer, the *lanista* (“doctor”). He was often a former gladiator, and he commanded a staff of tough ex-gladiators who served as instructors and guards. A *lanista*'s instructors were always on the lookout for new gladiators. They preferred volunteers—a gladiator who was reluctant to fight wasn't much use.

The best source of “recruits” was petty criminals. Rather than being executed, these people were enslaved and given a choice of punishment. They could either be sold to the owners of a mine or a gladiatorial school. Since the life of a mine slave meant backbreaking underground labor with no chance of freedom, the arena actually looked attractive by comparison. To encourage the gladiators to train hard and fight well, they were offered a chance at freedom. Someone who fought for three years and survived would be taken off the active rolls and allowed to serve as an instructor. After two more years training other gladiators, he would be freed.

Besides criminals, ordinary household or farm slaves who gave their masters trouble might be sold directly to a gladiatorial school as punishment. Again, the slave might receive a choice of volunteering for a *ludus* or going to the mines.

Captive barbarian warriors also fought in the arena. A *ludus*'s agents visited the slave markets looking for likely prospects. Warriors didn't need training, and their foreignness and fighting skills would make them obvious crowd-pleasers. They sometimes bought unwilling barbarians, figuring the threat of death or torture would prod any warrior into putting on a good show! This didn't always work. German warriors in particular usually preferred to die rather than perform for their captors' amusement. A war captive didn't have the same sta-





tus as a minor criminal, but if he cooperated he might expect to be made an instructor after a few years, and perhaps eventually be freed.

Some gladiators weren't slaves or criminals. Anyone could apply to join a gladiatorial school. If the trainers liked what they saw, they'd hire him, with ex-gladiators and ex-soldiers being particularly welcome. A free man signed on for the same term as a minor criminal (three years as a fighter, two as an instructor). However, he was paid a bonus on joining (assume 20 denarii times what his XP value would be as a slain monster), and he received extra prize money after each fight (3d6 denarii per XP his opponent was worth is a good figure). Many free gladiators were enslaved ones who had served out their five years but who had reenlisted since they knew no life but the arena.

A small number of women fought in the arena as trained and armed gladiators, although how they were recruited and lived is unknown. Sometimes fights involving women were serious, while at other times they were staged novelty events. Many conservative Romans were offended by the idea of female gladiators. Their appearance in the arena might be taken as a sign that the game's sponsor was decadent! Most recorded instances of female gladiators come from the reigns of Nero and Caligula.

Condemned criminals, both men and women, were sometimes executed in the arena, usually in the animal events that opened the games. They weren't considered true gladiators, since they had no training and were often not even given weapons. They might be forced to fight trained gladiators or, more often, wild beasts. These were public executions rather than combats; if someone miraculously survived, he would be either killed by guards or more opponents would be sent against him until he died. If a condemned PC strangles a lion bare-handed or performs some other truly amazing feat, the DM may allow the cheering crowd to persuade the game's sponsor to spare the hero's life, perhaps offering him a choice of death or becoming a real gladiator.

## The Life of a Gladiator

Gladiators lived in the barracks within the ludus. Accommodations were small cells. The food was simple fare, about what a typical peasant or laborer would get. Unlike a charioteer who might have 50 races per annum, a gladiator would fight only three or four times a year. The rest of his time was spent training with other gladiators and the instructors.

Gladiators were trained in specific styles of fighting, as described in the Gladiator kit section of Chapter 3: Characters.

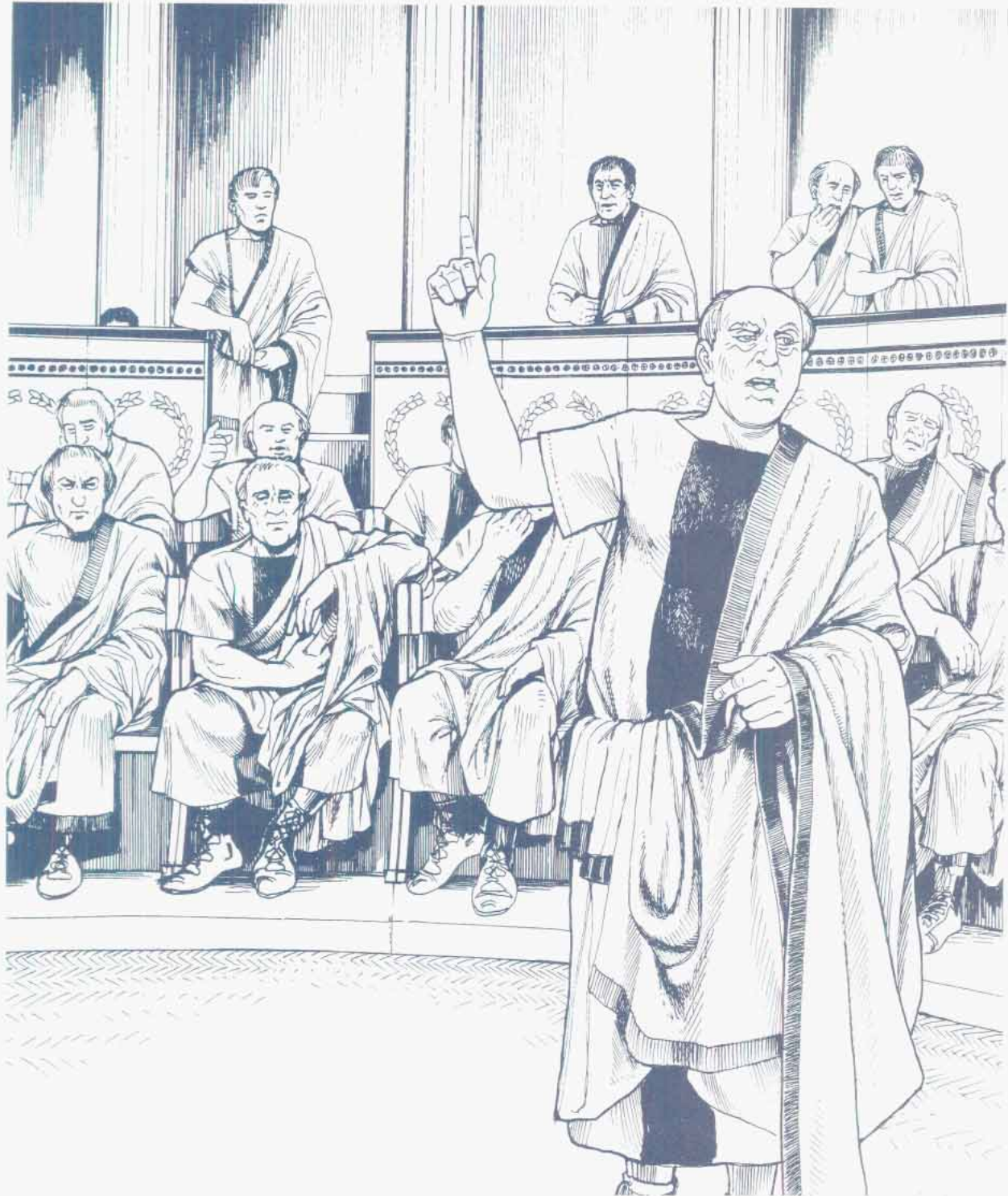
There were four main types of gladiators. The two heavy types each carried a sword and shield and wore armor and a visored helmet. These were the mirmillo, who wore a fish-crest on his helmet, and the Samnite with a plain helmet. The two light types of gladiators wore little armor. They were the retiarius, who carried a net and trident, and the Thracian, with a round shield and scimitar. Men with high dexterities were usually trained as light gladiators, while those with high strengths were trained as heavies.

Once a gladiator had received his basic training, he might be allowed time to himself. This depended on his origins and attitude, with minor criminals and free men given the most freedom and truculent captive warriors the least. If he refused to train or to fight, or made trouble with the other gladiators or his instructors, the ludus had isolation cells and torture chambers to teach him the error of his ways. If he cooperated in his training and fought well, he would be given free time, and perhaps even allowed to leave the ludus either for recreation or to earn money in private employment.

These extra-curricular activities of gladiators were notorious in Roman society. Gladiators were often hired as political stormtroopers by rival statesmen. During the tumultuous last century of the Republic, bands of club-wielding mercenary gladiators broke up public meetings and beat up magistrates! The Republic had no police force, and even in the Empire, the police were few and far between. Private citizens thus often hired gladiators to settle their affairs. A gladiator (or ex-gladiator) looking for extra money could easily find a job recovering debts, protecting people or property, hunting escaped slaves, or helping bring criminals to justice.

Like successful charioteers, famous gladiators had their rabid fans. The walls of Pompeii (and probably Rome) were scribbled with graffiti from female admirers who wrote lines like "Crescens the Net-Fighter Holds the Hearts of all the Girls." A wealthy woman who fell in love with a handsome gladiator might bribe his trainer to slip messages to him, proposing an affair. If the woman was a rich widow or had a husband whose business or war took him far from Rome, the affair was relatively safe and the gladiator could get valuable gifts as well as love. On the other hand, an affair with a woman who was married (or had yet to marry and was still protected by her father) was fraught with perils!









This chapter focuses on life in the late Republic and early Empire—the age of Marius, Caesar, Augustus, Nero, and Christ.

## The Roman Character

A Roman was expected to be diligent, self-sufficient, and well-disciplined. Not every Roman lived up to this, but every Roman judged other Romans in relation to their possessions, or lack of the following characteristics:

*Gravitas*: The dignified and noble conduct of actions, governed by prudence, discipline, strictness, and rigid self-control.

*Dignitas*: The holding of a worthwhile public position deserving of respect, and the willingness to defend that position against anyone who would diminish its worth.

*Auctoritas*: The ability to maintain authority and discipline in others through one's personal reputation and public position.

*Pietas*: An unflinching determination to fulfill one's duty, whether to family, friends, state, or the gods.

Romans were also known for their methodical approach, practicality, and persistence. Some traits they *weren't* known for are originality, boastfulness, xenophobia, cheerfulness, grace, and subtlety. Greeks tried to find out why things worked, while Romans built things that worked. The ideal Roman devoted his life to the service of the community (*res publica*) and the welfare of the people (*salus populi*).

## Roman Citizenship

Roman citizenship was initially restricted to people born in Rome and its hinterland of rural towns and villas. After the Social War (89 B.C.), citizenship was granted to most of Italy. During the Empire, it was granted piecemeal to provincial towns and cities until in a final move in A.D. 212, the entire Empire became "Roman."

## Patronage

At society's core was the patron-client relationship. A person could ask a more powerful individual to become his patron and provide him with protection, contacts, and advice. In exchange he became that person's henchman, or client, and owed his patron loyal service and deference. The prestige of an upper-class Roman was partly mea-

sured by the number and quality of his clients.

The system was enshrined by Roman law and tradition. It was also used by the state. When Rome entered into alliances with other nations, it became the patron of that client-state. Similarly, freed slaves automatically became clients of their former owners.

It was the duty of a patron to provide his client with legal aid, to bring lawsuits against anyone who wronged him, to arbitrate disputes between his clients and to defend them against persecution. A patron used his political influence to help his clients get ahead in business. In Rome, which had no effective police and laws that favored the rich, being a client of a powerful man was a major advantage!

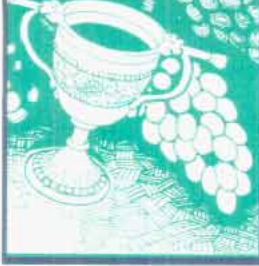
It was considered wrong for a client to ever sue his patron, testify against him in court, or fail to support him if the patron stood for election. But the most important duty of a client was to simply appear in public with his patron. When an influential man gave a public speech or appeared in court, he would be surrounded by a throng of cheering clients. In the civil disorder of the late Republic, politicians used mobs of their armed clients as stormtroopers to intimidate or attack rival political factions. A client who failed to perform his duties could expect no benefits from his patron—and he might even be prosecuted under the law.

A dutiful client was expected to appear every morning at his patron's house to see if he was needed; this was the "morning salute." In the hours before noon, the house of an influential Roman would be swarming with scores of clients. A proper patron was expected to see every one of them, greet them by name, listen to their problems, instruct them in any duties, and last but not least, offer a small gift (typically worth 3d6 denarii in cash or kind). Seeing clients might occupy the better part of the morning, each and every day. Some patrons neglected their clients by pleading urgent business and racing off, or staying in bed, but this was considered lazy and impolite.

## Social Rankings

There were seven broad social classes in Roman society. From the highest to the lowest they were senators, equestrians, common plebeians, foreigners, freedmen, and slaves. In Imperial times the emperor ranked above the senatorial class.





## The Senatorial Order

The aristocratic oligarchy that controlled Rome consisted of 300 to 600 Roman senators and their families. A senator held a (lifetime) appointment as a member of the senate and owned property worth 250,000 denarii. His income came from renting out his farmland, mines, or factories—managing a business was considered demeaning and was left to the lower orders. A male member of the senatorial order was expected to devote his life to unpaid public service. Someone who wasn't involved in law or politics, who wasn't a public figure, was believed to be a person of no consequence: "he will have no entourage, no escort for his sedan chair, no visitors in his antechamber."

A senatorial family maintained a *domus* (townhouse) in Rome and a *villa* (country estate) on a farm or at a seaside resort. A typical household comprised the father (*paterfamilias*), his wife, three children, a dozen clients, and a number of domestic slaves. Household slaves were socially invisible, but always present, even sleeping in the same room as their owners. The *paterfamilias* was the head of the family and held the legal power of life and death over the entire household—he could kill them, enslave them, or dispose of their possessions. Custom limited his power—for a *paterfamilias* to kill or beat his wife or children or abuse his slaves was scandalous, suggesting he lacked the wit to exercise more subtle means of control.

Children were raised by slave nurses and their mother. Boys and girls were taught to read and write by a *pedagogue* (usually a Greek slave), learning both Latin and Greek. A girl's education ended at 12, while a boy spent two to four more years being tutored in rhetoric, classics, and the rudiments of philosophy or mathematics. Boys also received martial and athletic training.

A boy donned adult clothing at 14. Between age 16 and 20, a youth's father found him his first public post in one of three positions senators considered honorable: as a lawyer, a military officer, or a junior political magistrate. He learned on the job from subordinates and colleagues. Since he was unpaid, he received an allowance from his father. A man remained under his *paterfamilias*'s thumb until his father's death granted him the inheritance he needed for independence.

Thirty was the proper age to stand for election as tribune or quaestor, political posts that made him a senator for life. If he did not inherit the necessary

250,000 denarii to qualify for senator, he would usually try to find a wealthy ally, perhaps marrying the daughter of a rich equestrian.

Even when a senator wasn't actively serving as a magistrate, he filled his time with senate meetings, providing legal advice to clients, cutting deals with political supporters, and attending social events, such as parties and recitations. It was vital that a senator remain in the public eye. He spent vast sums of money to provide the public with spectacles, plays, chariot races, new buildings, and gladiatorial battles, all in order to enhance his own prestige and win support in elections for higher political office. If he were successful, he would eventually achieve a position as a provincial governor. This would allow him to make back all his expenses through military conquest or graft, and thus spend the last years of his life in comfort as an extremely rich elder statesman.

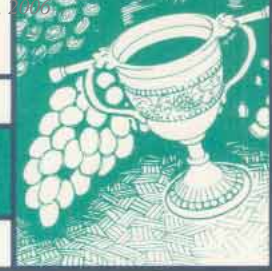
In contrast, women from senatorial families had little opportunity for a career. A girl was of marriageable age at 14. Her father would usually arrange her marriage as part of a political or economic alliance, giving her to a man several years her senior. She became a wife and adult, devoted to raising children and managing her husband's household. Most wives died in childbirth in their 30s, but if a wife outlived her husband (who might also die young) she could enjoy considerable freedom as a rich widow and heiress. Roman widows were not forced to remarry, and they could usually pursue their own interests (and be pursued by eligible bachelors).

Some senators were *nobiles*: those whose ancestors had been elected to the consulship (a senior government position). They formed a conservative old boys club that resisted change and made life hard for the "new men" in the senate. A few senators were *patricians* who traced their lineage to the legendary founding of Rome. By the late Republic, being a member of one of the surviving patrician families had similar meaning to being descended from the *Mayflower* passengers in modern-day America—it could imply distinction, but not privilege.

## The Equestrian Order

Equestrians (*equites*) were originally citizens who could afford to maintain a horse and armor for military service. By 100 B.C., wealth became the criteria—an equestrian was a Roman citizen whose assets were worth 100,000 denarii or more. An





equestrian family usually ran a big business, such as a shipping company, gladiatorial school, bank, or factory. Some military tribunes (senior legion officers) and town councillors were also equestrians. During the Empire, equestrians gained more political power, taking over many of the Empire's top civil service jobs.

A *publican* was an equestrian whose company made its profits by filling government contracts (e.g., for public works or supplying a legion). Their wealth gave them immense political clout, and they were notorious for buying the support of senators and magistrates with bribes and campaign contributions.

The most rapacious publicans were the tax-farmers. Instead of the state collecting provincial taxes, the job was farmed out to private business. The tax-farming companies submitted competitive bids to the senate; the one that bid the highest tax rate got the job. They then had to collect that tax rate from the province or pay the difference out of their own pockets—and if they collected anything *more* than the agreed tax, that was their personal profit! As a result, provinces were bled dry by greedy entrepreneurs. Publicans hired mercenaries who went from town to town, demanding exorbitant tithes by force, often backed up by the legions of the local governor. Most provincials weren't Roman citizens, and so they faced flogging, slavery, and seizure of property if they failed to pay the owed tax. When a province revolted, it was often because of the excesses of the tax-farmers!

Equestrian households were similar to those of the senatorial order, except that boys received less of an education, instead learning the family business.

A young equestrian male normally followed his father's orders and usually helped with the family business. By his late 30s he would probably be married, and might have inherited his father's enterprise or started his own. Instead of going into business, some equestrians joined the legions as military tribunes (senior officers). After a few years in the army, they usually went on to the civil service or law. If one was rich enough to qualify for the senate, he might enter politics, but unless he allied himself with a powerful senator he would have little chance of ever winning election to a magisterial post and thus appointment to the senate. If successful, he would be scorned by conservative senators as a "new man" but, in time, his family would become senatorial.

A woman was usually married in her teens to one of their father's business partners or political contacts. Her life was similar to that of a woman in a senatorial family, but she was likely to have greater involvement with her husband's business and finances.

### Common Plebeians

These were the general masses of free Roman citizenry, from the urban poor (also called *proles*) to peasant farmers, well-to-do shopkeepers, and common legionaries. A free citizen had various rights: He or she received preferential treatment over non-citizens in Roman courts, couldn't be flogged or tortured by the state, and (if a man in the Republic) could vote in popular assemblies. Before Rome switched to a volunteer army (mid-first century B.C.), a citizen faced conscription into the legions.

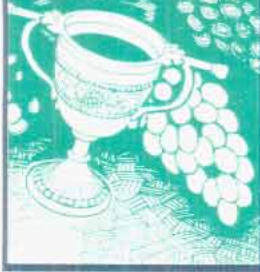
The mass of common plebeians lived in small apartments in multi-story buildings called *insulae*. By Imperial times, many of the Empire's plebeians were descended from freed slaves.

A common plebeian family consisted of a father (*paterfamilias*), wife, and three or four children. Some richer families had one or two slaves as part of the household. As in the senatorial order, the *paterfamilias* had total authority over his family. Boys and girls usually learned to read and write capital letters in latin, but had little other education. Boys became adults between 14 and 16 years of age; they went to work right away. Girls often married between age 14 and 20. A child might be educated by his or her parents or sent to a school run by a pedagogue.

A young man usually learned his father's occupation while helping him on the job. Some men also volunteered for the legions or (in the early Republic) were conscripted into them. Most commoners also belonged to clubs (*collegia*) of people sharing a common interest, favored god, or profession. The clubs were the center of social life. Clubs held dinner meetings, talked politics, sponsored religious festivals, and (very importantly) paid for the funerals of the poorer members. All clubs had rich senators or equestrians as patrons.

Women often mixed household duties and child rearing with professional careers, such as landlady or laundress. They weren't allowed to join *collegia*. More exotic careers open to plebeian women included some priesthoods and magic or soothsaying.





## Foreigners

Foreigners were individuals living in Roman-controlled provinces, cities, or towns who do not have Roman citizenship.

Most of the inhabitants of the provinces were foreigners; there were also many foreign immigrants living in Rome and other Italian cities.

Foreigners were free individuals, but they were subject to heavy taxation, were not legally allowed to marry Romans, could be punished by being flogged (unlike Roman citizens), and usually got the short end of the stick in any court cases against Roman citizens (-5 penalty on rolls to win court battles.)

## Freedmen

A freed slave was called a freedman or freedwoman. He or she usually lived like a common plebeian, except that a client-patron relationship automatically existed with the former owner.

Most freedmen were shopkeepers or artisans. Like plebeians, many belonged to collegia. During Imperial times, some freedmen achieved important

posts in the civil service. A freedman's children automatically became citizens.

Freedwomen were often quite independent. Some of Rome's most celebrated actresses and singers were freedwomen; this could be a possible background for a rogue PC.

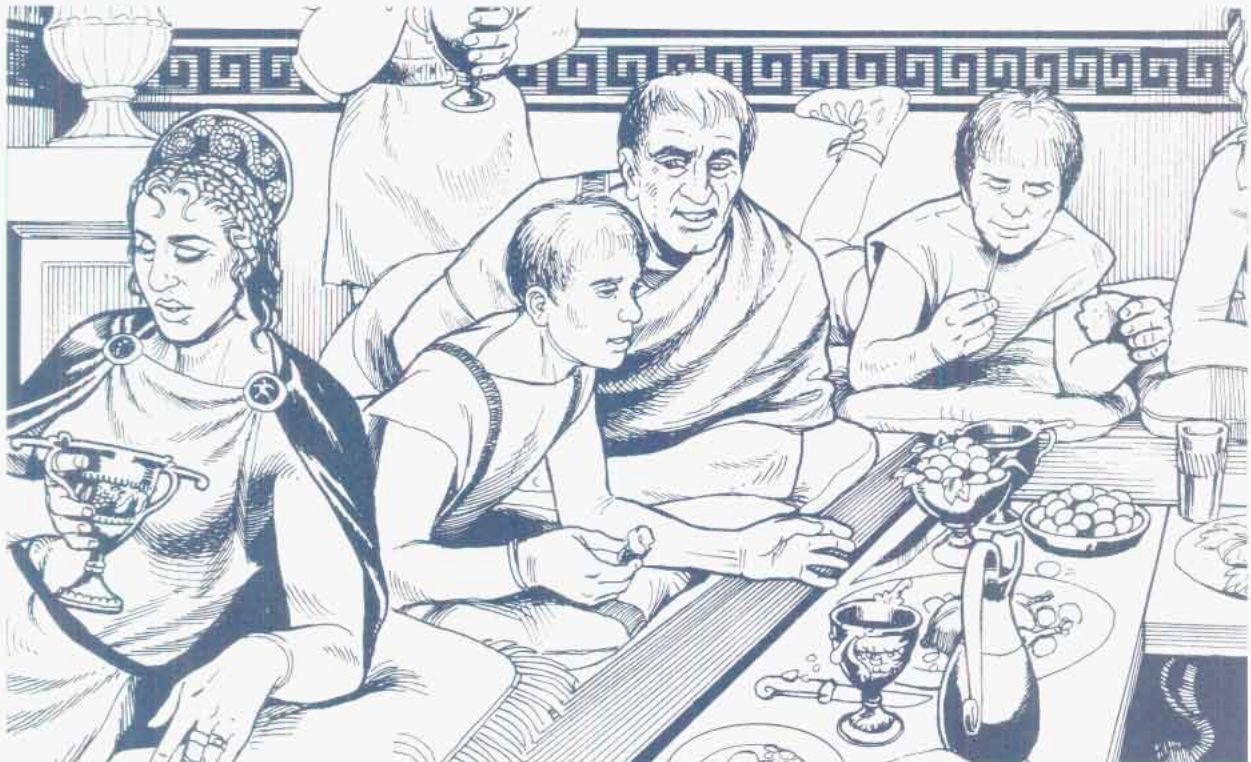
By the second century A.D., a majority of the Roman populace was descended from freedmen.

## Slaves

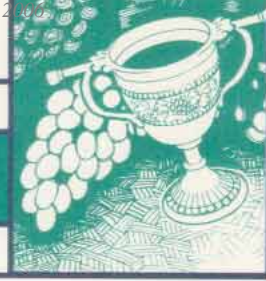
A slave might be a war captive, a pauper enslaved to pay debts, a sentenced criminal, or someone born of enslaved parents. Another way to become a slave was to be captured by bandits or pirates, who often claimed free citizens were slaves, and sold them in unscrupulous markets!

Most slaves were sold in the city forum (its central business district). Beautiful or skilled slaves were privately sold, often for outrageous prices, but if a war flooded the market with captives, prices for common slaves could be very low indeed. The law required slavers to notify buyers if a slave was sick, mad, zealously religious, or rebellious.

The luckiest slaves were those skilled individuals bought by a household or small business. They







could then establish personal ties with their owner, and if they got along, receive fair treatment and the freedom to leave their quarters after a work day. This let them moonlight in paying jobs and save up money to buy their freedom. A loyal slave would also hope to be freed by his owner's will.

A slave in a plantation, galley, or mine had a harder lot. He or she was under the whip of impersonal overseers—often slaves themselves—and would be chained up, fed little, and forced by beatings to work until nearly dead from exhaustion. The lives of enslaved gladiators and chariot drivers are discussed in Chapter 7: The Games.

Slaves sometimes revolted. In Italy and Sicily three revolts turned into Servile Wars, in which the rebels organized themselves and held out for years. The largest was the Third Servile War led by the gladiator Spartacus. It ended with Spartacus and all his followers crucified, but not before they had defeated several Roman legions!

The Romans greatly feared slave revolts, and harsh laws punished disobedient, runaway, or rebel slaves. A master could have a slave sold, beaten, or killed. Masters sold disobedient slaves to brothels or gladiator schools.

Crucifixion was the norm for any slave who took arms against his master. If an owner was killed by a slave and the culprit couldn't be found, the law required that all a man's slaves—men, women, and children—be put to death.

If a PC becomes a slave, the DM should give him a chance for either adventure or escape. Have the PC sold as a gladiator or chariot driver. After the novelty wears off, he can be freed for bravery in the arena or lead a revolt. Or sell him as a servant to a wandering merchant or philosopher who takes him on a long journey. During their travels, the PC can either save his master's life and be freed in gratitude, or he can escape.

## Politics

Rome was a federation of autonomous cities and towns. Towns were controlled by councils of local equestrian notables. The senate and magistrates acted as their patrons. In exchange for deference and taxes, the senate and magistrates handled law and order and—when they weren't engaged in civil war—kept the Pax Romanum.

From local *vigiles* (police officers) and town councillors to senators and provincial governors, most Roman officials required greased palms before

doing almost anything. Bribery and extortion were standard operating procedures. Protection money (often 20% or more of income) was regularly extorted by officials from local merchants as the price for doing business without harassment. This was especially true in the provinces, where the majority of the population were foreigners. The Roman author Cicero wrote: "to pillage the provinces was the senatorial way to get rich."

It was a two-way street, however. Roman politicians were expected to dip deeply into their own pockets to fund civic expenses, such as erecting public buildings (like baths or monuments) or staging religious festivals or games. In return, they could expect official letters of honor from the city, to be invited to preside at regular banquets or ceremonies, that deaths in their families would be mourned as a public event, and that when they entered the city formally they would be received like kings. Collecting cities was a respectable hobby for some senators and the source of much prestige. Even so, this expense was such that many statesmen were either forced deeply into debt to equestrian money lenders, or into retirement from politics!

## Republican Government

The Republican system ruled Rome from 508 B.C. until Caesar's dictatorship in 48 B.C.; it did not vanish until 27 B.C., when Augustus became emperor.

In theory, the Roman constitution granted authority to the people. In practice, Rome was controlled by an oligarchy of rank and old money within the senate, which held onto its position by a mix of wealth and sheer ability. The Republic attempted to limit the powers of the masses while keeping a lid on the ambitions of the individual senators. A politician strove for fame and power, but even the most preeminent man was revered as merely the first-among-equals. When someone like Caesar tried to step beyond that, it meant trouble.

## The Assemblies

Every male citizen could choose to vote on legislation or to elect government officials by participating in the *assemblies*, mass gatherings that were held outdoors at Rome. However, Rome was not a democracy; clients were expected to vote for their patrons, and the electoral system was rigged to give fewer votes to the urban poor and more votes





to rural areas. Since the only rural people who could afford to travel to Rome to vote were the rich, the elite kept control.

Even so, Roman statesmen had to be adept at manipulating the assemblies, since their votes were needed to gain election to high office, see pet laws approved, or block the election of rivals. To aid in this, it became customary to hold a lively public discussion a few days before voting, called a *contio*. Anyone was free to attend, including non-voters, such as women, slaves, and foreigners.

Contio are useful focuses for adventures involving Roman politics. They gave charismatic orators a chance to influence the people prior to voting, and they gave the people a voice if they were angry enough to frighten the speaking magistrates! They often turned rowdy, and more than one contio ended in violence when rival factions led squads of hired gladiators or club-armed clients to break up meetings that were going the wrong way. Contio were unpopular with conservative senators who feared they led to unhealthy Athenian-style democracy.

## Magistrates

One purpose of popular assemblies was to elect public officials, called magistrates, to govern Rome. Most magistrates served for only a single year, so rapid turn-around of officials was the rule. Politics was very lively, with new elections every year!

Roman magistrates were unpaid, but some expenses were covered by the treasury. A man appointed as a magistrate had a staff of civil servants and slaves to perform routine duties. For senior posts with imperium, there was the ability to command the legions.

An ambitious politician attempted to achieve election to a chain of offices called the *Cursus honorum*, "the way of honor." The expected sequence was: Quaestor-Senator-Praetor-Consul.

## Junior Magistrates

These positions were usually held by men aged 25 to 30. If a PC enters politics, he will likely stand for election to either *aedile*, Tribune of the Soldiers, *quaestor*, or Tribune of the People. This requires political campaigning, similar to a modern election campaign. To win any of these posts, a candidate or his backers has to make rousing public speeches on major issues, set up secret deals to win the endorsements of senators and interest groups, make gener-

ous campaign promises, and spend lots of money on parties and bribes. Meanwhile, rival candidates hire agents to probe his family background or try to manufacture scandals to discredit him. Alternatively, they might try the direct approach and send bands of gladiators or mobs of armed clients to disrupt his public speeches, beat up his supporters, or maim or kill him. That's politics, Roman-style. It can provide PCs with plenty of adventure and intrigue, either as candidates or agents striving to dig up dirt on rivals or protect their own man.

Here are the prizes:

*Plebeian aediles* were junior city magistrates. Rome had two of them, but all cities and towns with a Roman-style government also elected their own aediles.

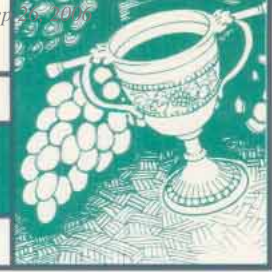
Aediles are the officials a street-level character would have the most contact with. Think of them as crosses between city councillors, district attorneys, and the chamber of commerce. They were responsible for public order, arresting criminals, repairing streets and aqueducts, inspecting temples, baths, taverns, and brothels to maintain public health and morals, and handling disputes between merchants. They could levy fines for breaking regulations connected with their duties (e.g., against a merchant who sold shoddy goods).

Aediles also handled "bread and circuses," making sure the masses got their grain and organizing the games. Most were rising politicians who sought to put on a good show to boost their popularity and influence. This often required the aedile's own money. Many aediles went into debt or made use of secret backers—when Julius Caesar was aedile early in his career, he was financed by the wealthy Crassus. An aedile might hire adventurers to capture exotic beasts to make his games more memorable! In a street-level campaign, it's the aedile who is concerned with mysterious disappearances, crime waves, or suppressing evil cults.

*Tribune of the Soldiers* was an elected military position. Twenty-four young men (aged from 25 to 29) were elected as tribunes of the soldiers each year and then served as officers with the rank of military tribune in a legion. Unlike other offices, a hard election campaign was rarely needed for this post, since there were several positions to fill. Tribune of the soldiers did not directly lead to other political office, but it was useful for building up one's reputation.

*Quaestor* was the most prestigious junior post, because it led directly to the senate. Quaestors kept





track of the finances in Rome's treasury and customs offices. There were 12 to 16 quaestors elected each year. Half were assigned the boring task of keeping account of public spending in Rome, but the lucky half were sent out one to each province as deputies to the provincial governors. If rebellion or war broke out there, a young quaestor might find his term extended for the duration while he helped plan and lead a military campaign! Any quaestor would expect appointment to the senate when his term expired.

*Tribune of the People* was the most useful junior office. Every year ten tribunes of the people were elected, and they took an oath to champion the lives and properties of the plebeians. They were usually a counterbalance to the more conservative senate, even though after 149 B.C. they automatically became senators upon election. Tribunes could summon the popular assemblies to meetings or contios and introduce legislation. They had two special powers. They could *veto* (forbid) the actions of any other magistrate, in peace or in war, calling a halt to an election, stopping the passing of a law, or nullifying senatorial decrees. Politicians who held a grudge against a political rival sometimes ran for tribune to take out their frustrations by vetoing their foe's acts. Tribunes were often bribed by senators or magistrates to use—or not use—their veto powers. Tribunes also had the right of *sacrosanctus*. This meant that no one was to hinder them in their duties or harm them. Anyone doing so could be executed by the state.

The key to becoming a tribune of the people was high charisma and good rhetorical skills. This was an "angry young man" office in which an ambitious newcomer could make his mark as a crusader for plebeian rights or a defender of traditional values. But a tribune of the people had two limits on his power. Both were traditional rather than legal. First, he was not supposed to interfere with foreign affairs or senate appointments. Second, he was expected to serve only a single, one-year term in office, from December to December, and he was not to seek re-election. *Sacrosanctus* aside, several tribunes of the people who violated these unwritten rules came to messy ends, either assassinated or slain by rioting mobs raised up by rival tribunes or jealous senators!

## The Senate

The senate acted as an advisory body, but it had

immense influence. The senate met in private to discuss anything that affected the Roman state. Only senior senators were allowed to speak, but debates could last for days. The senate sometimes polarized into *optimates* (conservatives who preferred the traditional laws) and *populares* (who favored land reform and expanding the franchise and the power of the assemblies) but there were no organized parties.

After a discussion, they could vote to issue a decree called a *senatus consultum* that, by custom, had the force of law. If a decree failed to pass the senate, a tribune of the people could take it to the popular assemblies. Theoretically the assemblies could overturn a senate decree or pass laws that the senate had voted down. But by ancient tradition, the assemblies were not to oppose the senate on matters of the treasury, foreign affairs, or war. Attempts by tribunes of the people—usually on behalf of the populares faction—to bypass the senate were resented by conservatives. This sometimes led to riots, assassination, and blood on the streets.

## Senior Magistrates

Only senators could run for these positions; elections were often as rowdy as those for junior office. Some senior magistrates had *imperium*: this did not mean additional power, but a more senior magistrate's *imperium* or a tribune's *veto* could counter his decrees within his sphere of influence. A magistrate with *imperium* sat in a special ivory chair. As he went about his business he was preceded by civil servants (*lictors*) carrying *fascies*, a bundle of birch rods.

The number of rods indicated his power relative to other magistrates: two for curule aedile, six for praetor or proconsul, 12 for consul, and 24 for dictator. If his *imperium* extended beyond Rome's city limits, an axe was added. This meant that (outside Rome) he could exercise the power of life and death over others.

*Curule aediles* were the senior pair of Rome's four city magistrates. Their duties were similar to the plebeian aediles, but they had more influence. They held *imperium* within Rome's city limits.

The *urban praetor* was the chief justice of Rome. He arbitrated legal disputes and chose judges for civil suits. He was the guardian of the city of Rome and held *imperium* within five miles of its limits. If no consuls were in Rome, he was in charge of defending the city.





Foreign praetors first handled legal cases involving foreigners, but their power grew as Rome acquired overseas provinces. They had imperium with the power of life and death over non-citizens and could raise and lead legions in the provinces. This would be an exciting post for a powerful PC, as these roving arbitrators, administrators, and investigators could become involved in explosive situations anywhere in the Roman world.

*Censors* served two at a time for a five-year term. The censor supervised a general census of Rome's people every five years and regulated membership in the equestrians and senate. A censor had no imperium; his main power was financial, to decide which publicans received government contracts. Only a senator who had served as consul (see the next paragraph) could be elected censor. This marked the highwater mark of public life.

*Consul* was the highest public office. Two consuls were elected by an assembly of the people each year to hold supreme executive power, forming a dual presidency under which all other magistrates (except tribunes of the people) served. Consuls could summon the senate and assemblies and set the agenda for discussion, and it was up to them to find ways to execute their decrees. Their imperium superseded that of subordinate magistrates, and they held supreme command of Rome's legions.

An ambitious man hoped to be consul by the age of 42, after many years of service in the senate and other posts. The two consuls ruled on alternate months as a check on their power. Romans preferred consuls who would cooperate, but in turbulent times, bitter rivals with opposing policies might be elected and proceed to undo each other's works. Ruthless consuls bullied their partners into submission. Julius Caesar's term was known as the "consulship of Caesar and Caesar" because he utterly dominated his rival. Ex-consuls were called *consular* and received a great deal of respect.

*Dictator* was a rarely used appointment that gave a magistrate (usually a consul) supreme power, immune even to a veto for one year. In the early Republic, it was sometimes voted to a leader in a dire emergency.

## Proconsuls and Propraeors

Most magistrates served for a single year, but as Rome grew, the need to fight wars or govern troublesome overseas territory revealed a need for

provincial governorships and military commands lasting for several years or more.

*Propraetors* had the power of a foreign praetor, but they were each limited to a single province. This was the usual position given a man assigned to govern a peaceful province. The appointment could be renewed by the senate annually until the task was over or they decided he wasn't the man for the job.

A propraetor had almost unlimited power within his province. His duty was to keep order, defend it from outside aggression, collect taxes, and see to the welfare of Roman citizens. Many governors took bribes from merchants or allied themselves with the tax-farmers and made themselves extremely wealthy in the process. If a governor was too blatant (or his enemies in Rome too alert) he might be recalled by the senate to face treason charges. PCs could even be hired by these enemies to travel to a province to find hard evidence of corruption!

*Proconsuls* had the power of consuls, but they were each limited to a single difficult mission, such as governing a rebellious province or leading an army against an enemy of Rome. This free hand was only given to former consuls or praetors.

Proconsuls often used their power to enrich themselves. Others (like Caesar) exceeded their original mandate and conquered vast new territories for Rome. A triumphant proconsul was rich and famous, but also the object of envy and fear. He led veteran legions whose main loyalty was to him rather than to Rome. Conflicts occurred when a proconsul felt jealous senators were plotting to have him removed from office and tried for treason, or when a cash-strapped or envious senate refused to vote his troops the back-pay and bonus land-grants he felt they deserved. Eventually this kind of power struggle led to a mammoth civil war that brought down the Republic. The winner was Octavian. He took the name Augustus Caesar and became the first Roman emperor.

## Imperial Government

As emperor and "first citizen," Augustus had the senate and assemblies vote him a package of permanent powers, including those of proconsul and tribune. Imperial power was confirmed by personal control of the legions and civil service, and by immense personal wealth that was regularly swelled through gifts, bequests left in wills, and





confiscation of the estates of his enemies. Many of the old institutions remained, and new ones were added, but power was more centralized, reducing the risk of civil war as long as the emperor stayed strong.

*The Court:* These were the friends and favorites of the emperor, his wife, and immediate family. Just as influential were those slaves and freedmen who were his personal servants and secretaries. To have any chance of an audience being granted with the emperor, making or buying a friend at court was essential.

*Popular Assemblies:* The assemblies lost their importance. Elections ceased to be turbulent affairs; now they simply rubber-stamped imperial appointments.

*The Senate:* This became a purely advisory body. Lacking the cut-and-thrust of Republican politics, it was a social club for old money, or at best a pool of aristocratic talent for top government jobs.

*Magistrates:* The forms of the old Republic were preserved. The magistrates such as consuls, proconsuls, and praetors still existed, but their imperium was subordinate to that of the emperor.

*The Urban Prefect:* This was a new magistrate of consular rank responsible for order in Rome. He had imperium and controlled a standing police force (the urban cohorts) and the law courts.

*Legates:* Those appointed by the emperor to legate positions now commanded legions. If there was only one legion in a province, its legate was the governor. Otherwise, the legate usually served under a proconsul who was the governor. The title of legate was also used for someone granted extraordinary powers by the emperor for a special mission.

*The Imperial Household:* This was the civil-service bureaucracy that ran the day-to-day affairs of the Empire. Its top officials (called *procurators*) were usually equestrians, or occasionally skilled freedmen. Procurators might govern small provinces, act as deputies for legates, or administer other important areas, such as aqueducts, taxes, the games, or Imperial estates.

*The Legions:* These were no longer ad-hoc forces raised by individual consuls or proconsuls. They became a permanent standing army paid by the state and stationed on the frontiers of the empire.

*The Praetorian Guard:* This was an elite force encamped in Rome that served as the emperor's bodyguard and kept order in Rome and Italy. Its head was among the most powerful men in Rome. Ruthless emperors used the guard to arrest anyone

suspected of plotting against them. More than one unpopular emperor was killed by the praetorians, who then picked the new emperor or sold the throne to the highest bidder.

*Provincial Prefects:* These were imperial administrators (usually of equestrian rank) appointed to rule quiet provinces (those without legions). They were usually former officers or civil servants. A provincial prefect was similar to the old *propraetor*, but he was kept under closer Imperial control.

## City Life

In the Roman world, the city was the center of political and commercial life to a degree that would not be realized again until the Renaissance. The greatest of all cities was Rome-on-the-Tiber, the largest metropolis in the ancient world. With a population that varied from one to two million souls during the late Republic and most of the Empire, Rome was a vibrant, crowded city filled with life, noise, and energy. It was the center of the Roman world, and probably the center of a Roman campaign.

Only a centralized political system could feed this many people. As the Roman Empire slowly slipped into darkness, urban populations declined.

This section focuses on life in Rome, since this greatest of cities is the urban center most characters will visit. A dozen other Mediterranean cities had populations in the hundreds of thousands, and would have many of the same services as Rome. Also, many smaller cities built in the late Republic and Empire deliberately imitated Rome, enabling the DM to use Rome as a model when designing smaller urban centers.

## Caesar's Rome

This is the Rome of the middle and late Republic—that of Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Crassus, and Julius Caesar. The major locations on the map of Rome are described below.

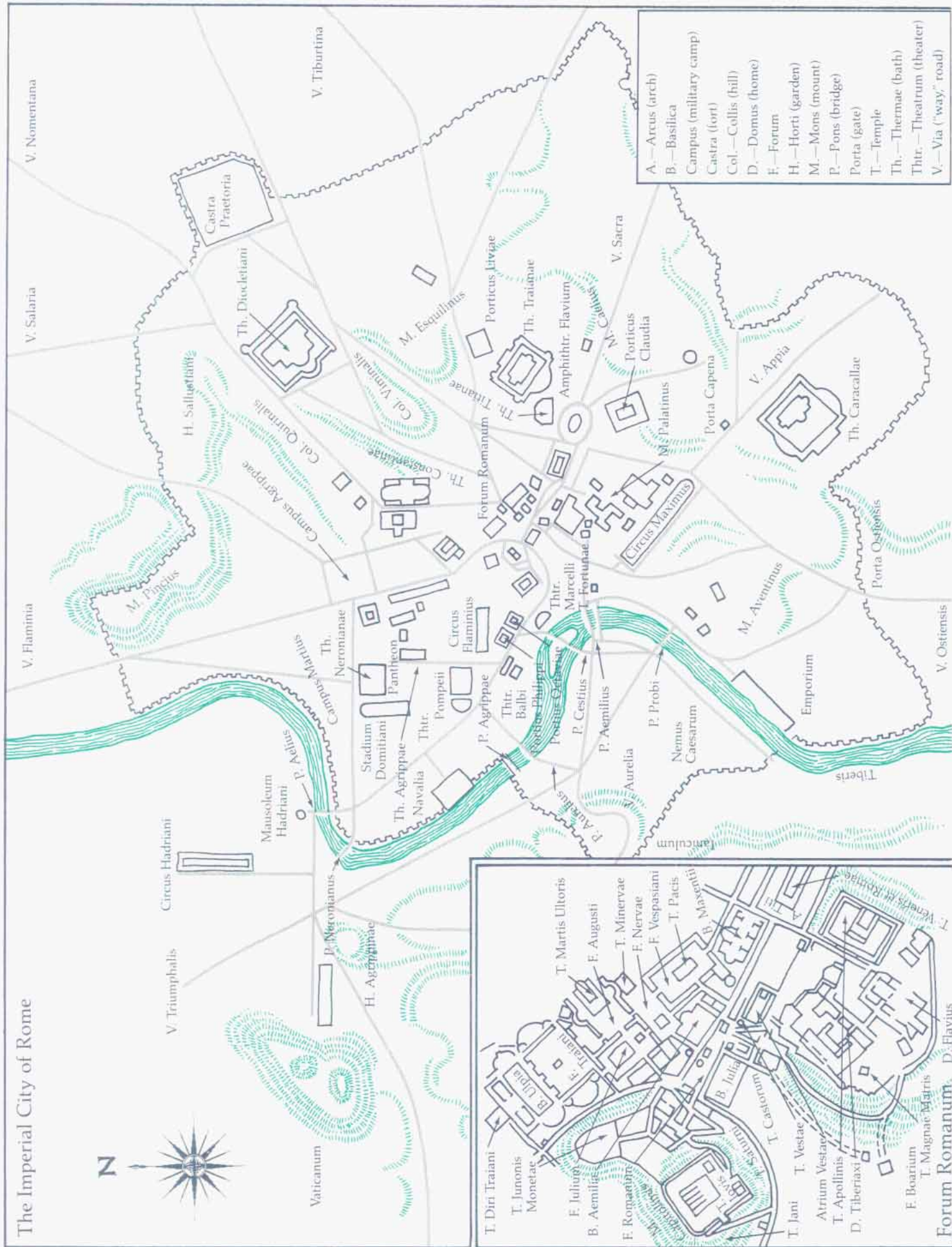
Rome was built on seven hills, the most famous being the central Capitoline and the Palatine. It had over a million residents living in 1,700 private houses and 46,000 apartment blocks.

## Rome Within the Walls

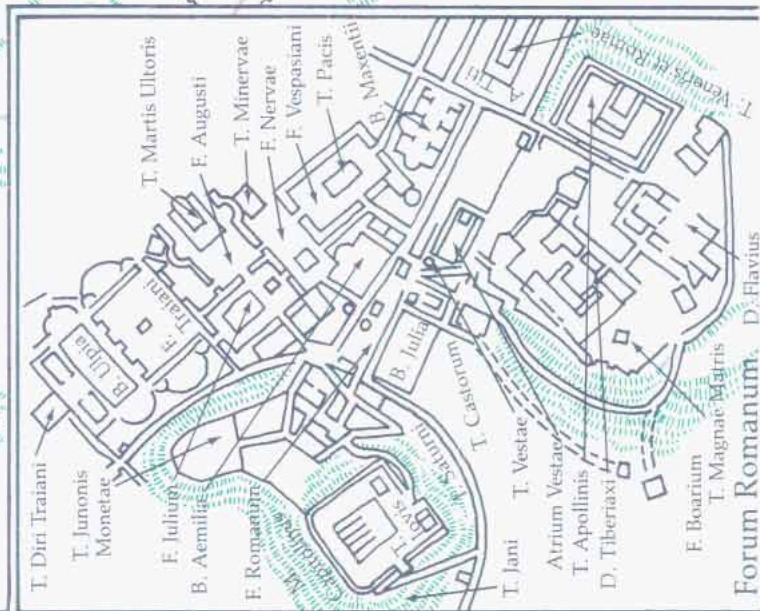
The Servian Walls were the ancient walls that enclosed Rome. The Romans dated them back to the



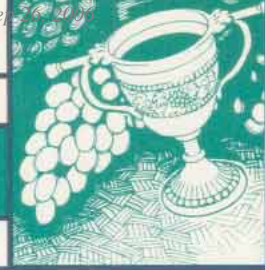
## The Imperial City of Rome



## Forum Romanum







time of the monarchy.

The walls were pierced with 17 gates, each one leading into a confusing web of streets. Few streets were more than 17 feet wide, and there was a network of shadowy back alleys that were half that width. Buildings were packed closely together and weren't numbered. A stranger would find it very easy to get lost, especially at night. No wheeled vehicles were allowed in Rome by day—people walked or were borne on litters by slaves.

Crime and fire were constant risks of city life. There was no city watch or public fire brigade during the Republic. Fire brigades were run as private businesses. The Roman businessman Crassus had a notorious "fire brigade" whose men would offer to buy burning buildings for low prices, putting out the fire only if the owner agreed to sell.

Some streets were unpaved and easily turned to mud, and slops were casually tossed out windows, but the Romans generally appreciated the virtue of sanitation. City magistrates employed gangs of slaves to keep the streets and sewers clean.

The following are brief introductions to noteworthy areas of Rome.

**Capital:** The Capitoline Hill is in the northwestern section of Rome. The hill top was devoted to temples, while the slopes were the site of exclusive private residences and attractive gardens for Rome's wealthy elite. Public buildings on the Capital included two temples of Jupiter, the temple of (military) Honor and Virtue, the Temple of Fortuna, the Temple of Good Faith, and the Temple of Plenty (which held part of the treasury). It also held the Tarpien Rock, Rome's place of execution from which traitors and murderers were pushed off an 80-foot drop. The Aerarium was Rome's treasury, holding documents, ingots of gold and silver, and other valuables. It was controlled by the quaestors or urban praetors and served by many civil servants.

**Temple of Ceres:** This building was on the eastern side within the city walls, near the Port of Rome. It contained the offices of the city magistrates, the aediles.

**Temple of Magna Mater:** This was the temple to Cybele, the Great Mother goddess, located just southeast of the Capital.

**The Palatine:** This is the most exclusive neighborhood in the city, situated on one of the seven hills of Rome.

**Forum Romanum:** This long, open plaza was the hub of Roman politics, law, and business—the

downtown of ancient Rome. It was the chief public square, surrounded by monumental buildings, many of them *basilica* devoted to law courts, legal and political offices, business offices, banks, and quality shops. The Forum contained many temples and the headquarters of the tribunes of the people. During daylight hours it was packed with crowds. Many orators harangued the masses here, sometimes leading to riots. Many people also came to watch the legal and political battles. Influential Romans tried to get houses nearby.

**Curia Hostilia:** Located on the edge of the Forum Romanum, this building was the meeting place of the Senate. A large block of senatorial offices were attached to it. When the senate was in session, crowds of clients and interested parties waited outside to be the first to hear what happened during the debates. Sometimes senators would address crowds from its steps.

**Regia:** This building within the Forum Romanum contained the offices of the College of Priests, shrines to Rome's oldest gods, including Vesta and Mars, and Rome's archives. These held financial records and the minutes of senate debates, so the Regia could be a target for spies.

**Macellum:** This was a bazaar near the Forum Romanum, in which almost anything was available for a price. PCs may come here to find exotic purchases or foreign merchants.

**Velabrum:** Next to the Forum Piscium, this was a mixed district of small markets, craftshops and apartment blocks (*insulae*). Characters new to Rome might find an inexpensive apartment here.

**Circus Maximus:** This vast edifice was the site of the biggest chariot races. It was in a valley a mile south of the Capitoline hill. It could seat as many as 250,000 spectators.

**Forum Boarium:** These bustling meat-markets adjacent to the northern end of the Circus Maximus sold live beasts and fresh meat. The smell kept upper-class Romans away, but it was filled with slaves, freedmen, and plebeians.

**Forum Piscium:** These were Rome's fish markets, just south of the Forum Boarium. If anything stank worse than the Forum Boarium, it was the Forum Piscium. Some days the smell blew as far as the Curia Hostilia, disturbing the senators. A good place to meet to avoid upper-class Romans!

**The Subura:** This was Rome's infamous slum district. This densely populated quarter was located east of the Forum Romanum and almost entirely devoted to *insulae* (apartment blocks) that housed





the teeming urban poor. It was not just a residential area. Ground stories of insulae held shops, restaurants, and taverns. Many Subara residents were foreigners—Greeks, Gauls, Jews, and other ethnic groups rubbed shoulders. The area had a very high crime rate, and only a brave or foolish man walked the Subara at night.

*Carinae:* This was a well-to-do neighborhood just above the Forum Romanum. This was where senators and knights often lived.

*Argiletum:* This district, near the Forum, was known for its craftsmen and booksellers.

## Outside the City Walls

Several major landmarks were located just outside the city walls.

*The River Tiber:* Rome was often called Rome-on-the-Tiber, for this great river bordered the western side of the city and formed a natural highway to the Mediterranean Sea.

*Campus Martius:* A large, open area located just outside the walls to the northwest of the city, it was enclosed by a bend in the Tiber River. Part of it was devoted to farming and public parks, while other parts were open fields. The name “Camp of Mars” came from the fact that victorious armies were quartered here when they came to Rome to participate in a general’s *triumph*. The area was also used for stabling horses, military training, and public assemblies.

*Porticus Minucia:* A porticus is an open-columned business area. The Porticus Minucia was located on the Campus Martius and it was here that grain rations were issued to the masses. Sometimes pirates or foreign war threatened to interrupt the grain supply. When this happened, the Porticus Minucia would be filled with tense, worried people demanding the magistrates do something. Rival orators worked the crowds at such times, some trying to reassure them, others seeking to win supporters by blaming those in power.

*Pompey’s Complex:* Built in the last years of the Republic adjacent to the Campus Martius, this was an impressive array of buildings containing a drama theater, a meeting hall, and a Temple to Victory. It was here that Julius Caesar was murdered.

*Campus Vaticanus:* Market gardens located on the northwestern edge of Rome, on the far side of the Tiber River. Produce grown here and on the Campus Martius was sold in the Forum Holitorium.

*Circus Flaminius:* This chariot race track was situ-

ated outside the border of the city next to the Campus Martius. It was built in 221 BC. The circus building also contained several temples. Among them was the temple to Mars Undefeated, to Hercules and the Nine Muses (famous for its beauty), and to Vulcan. The Circus Flaminius was sometimes used as a meeting place for the plebian assembly.

*Port of Rome:* The city’s busy wharves and warehouses were located just outside the walls on the Tiber River. Sea-going traffic and naval vessels docked at the nearby town of Ostia at the Tiber’s mouth.

*Transiberium:* As the name suggests, this was the suburb on the other side of the Tiber from Rome. Right across from the Port of Mars, its streets were dominated by warehouses and the apartments of sailors, bargemen, cargo handlers, brokers, and so on. This rough neighborhood is a good place to make contact with sailors or arrange passage on a boat.

*Forum Holitorium:* A large vegetable market along the Servian Wall on the inner bank of the Tiber, south of the Capital and adjacent to the Campus Martius. By day it would be packed with farmers and shoppers, many of them women, haggling over produce.

*Aqueducts:* These great engineering works lined the southern and eastern parts of the city. They channelled water for the citizens, sewers, fountains, and gardens of Rome. Romans actually used more water per person than many 20th-century cities. Water use was regulated by inspectors, but illegal taps and pipes to private estates were common.

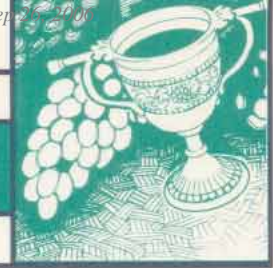
*Necropolis:* These were the burial grounds located outside the walls northeast of Rome. Romans usually cremated their bodies before burial, but some families, as well as sects, such as the Christians, buried them without cremation. At night, people avoided the necropolis, for fear of witches and the spirits of the dead.

## Imperial Rome

Augustus boasted that he found Rome a city of brick and made it a city of marble. He and successive emperors all tried to make their mark on the city by erecting huge public works to stand as monuments. Particularly extensive rebuilding took place during Nero’s reign, when a great fire destroyed much of the city.

Rome was also made safer. The *vigiles* (fire





department) and urban cohorts (paramilitary police) were introduced.

Some of the changes that took place in Imperial Rome are described below:

*The Palatine* was built over by Augustus's huge multi-floored palace, the Palatium. As successive emperors added more wings and rooms, the Imperial palace grew like a gilded fungus to cover the entire hill. The Palatium housed the luxurious apartments of the emperor and his court. Adjoining wings contained offices for several thousand civil servants.

*The Colosseum* was the huge amphitheater in which gladiatorial contests and other bloody spectacles were held. It could seat about 50,000 people.

*The Pantheon* was a huge domed temple dedicated to the state religion and to the worship of deified emperors. It was built in 27 B.C.

*The Aurelian Wall* was added in the late third century B.C., since Rome had by now grown far beyond the old Servian Wall.

*The Catacombs* were a network of underground passages under the city. Christians used them as burial chambers and hiding places. But who knows what else might be lurking in them?

## Roman Life

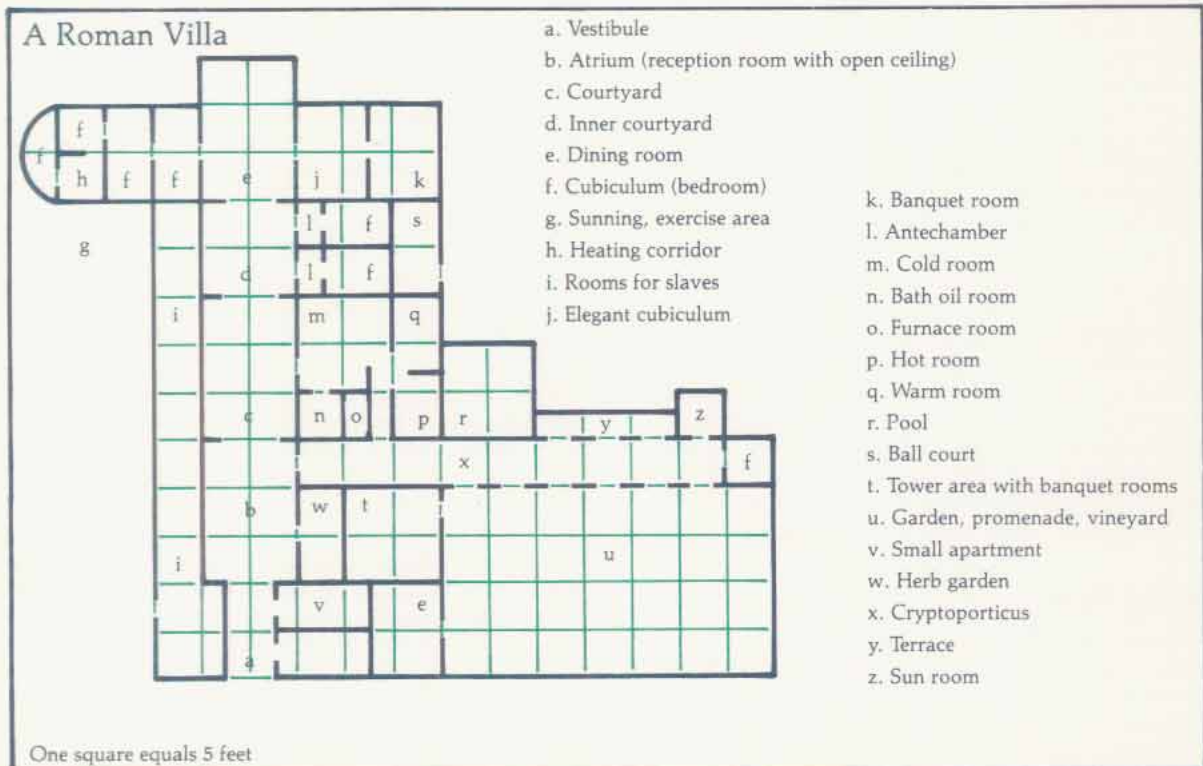
This section describes some aspects of Roman daily life.

### Insulae

House and apartment prices were higher in Rome than in the surrounding towns, so many people lived in apartment buildings—over 40,000 of them in Rome alone. The descriptive term *insula* (meaning "island") was used by the Romans to describe them. An insula was up to 100 feet tall. The first floors often contained shops or taverns as well as apartments.

Many insulae were cheaply constructed and soon fell into decay. The Roman writer Martial remarked that his building was so poorly maintained that not only the tenants but also the mice had moved out. Some tall buildings actually collapsed, and others were firetraps.

Making matters worse was the city's noise. To cut down day-time traffic congestion, night was the only time that wheeled carts and wagons (which supplied the city with goods) were allowed on the







streets. The Roman satirist Juvenal complained:

"Here in Rome many sick people die from lack of sleep. Noise deprives them of it, and they develop ulcers and become ill. In this city sleep comes only to the wealthy (who can escape to the country). This is the source of the disease: carts creaking through the narrow and winding streets and the curses of drivers caught in traffic jams will rob even a deaf man of sleep."

## Domus and Villa

While the masses were crowded into insulae, senators and equestrians maintained lavish residences both in Rome and in the country.

A *villa* was originally a farmstead. It became a self-contained country residence, a vacation home suitable for the agricultural pretensions of the Roman elite. A *domus* was a mansion in the city, smaller but no less luxurious.

A *domus* and the central house in a *villa* followed a similar plan. People entered via a corridor ending in a doorway and a *vestibule* manned by a doorman. A permitted visitor then found himself in the *atrium*, a furnished reception room lit by a roof shaft and containing a small pool. Opening into the atrium were bedrooms and guestrooms (*cubiculum*) and a dining room (*triclinium*). Other corridors led off to the kitchen, slave quarters, store rooms, and private lavatories. Often there was a second courtyard, the open-roofed *peristyle*, with a fountain and ornamental garden. There was also a back door for slaves and servants, so they could enter and leave without passing through the atrium.

## Shops

Only the most expensive shops were designed to be walked into like modern stores. A typical shop was on the ground floor of an insulae. It had an open store front with a counter facing the street. The customers remained outside while the owner stood behind the counter. Inside the store was a store room or a workshop—since most shops made their own goods—and cramped living quarters.

## Keeping Time

The date was kept from Year One of the legendary founding of Rome (Ab Urbe Condita, or AUC). 753 B.C. was Year One, so add 753 to get A.D. or subtract 754 to get B.C.

The year was divided into 10 months: Martius, Aprilis, Maius, Iunius, Quinctilis, Sextilis, September, October, November, December. This was altered twice. First it was increased to 12 months, adding Ianuarius and Februaries. Then in the Imperial period, two months were renamed after Julius Caesar and Augustus: Quinctilis became Iulius and Sextilis became Augustus.

The 24 hours in a day were kept track of with sundials.

## Entertainment

All Romans enjoyed eating and drinking in the company of friends. Equestrians and senators entertained with an endless round of dinner parties. They might be extravagant affairs with exotic food, music, and dancing girls, or sedate dinners in which the host gave a recitation. Invitations were frequent—a Roman of equestrian or senatorial rank might eat out every other day. Due to the large number of socially inferior clients many hosts had, varying qualities of food were served at the same party for guests of different social rank.

The apartments of the poor had no room for parties, so they socialized at neighborhood taverns, sitting on stools and drinking wine and eating takeout or snack food, or at club banquets put on by their collegia.

Private amusements were board games and gambling with dice or knucklebones; gambling was often publicly suppressed, but everyone did it. The wealthy also hunted on their estates. Everyone attended chariot racing at the circus with gladiatorial games. Stage shows featuring music, mime, and dancing were popular, with both male and female actors acting out mythological stories. Greek-style plays and athletic contests also existed, but these had less appeal.

The public baths were an institution enjoyed by everyone, regardless of sex or social status. During the Empire, huge marble bath houses rivalled the forums as places Romans met to socialize, relax, or keep in shape. The main baths consisted of a *sudatorium* (steam room), *tepidarium* (warm water), *caldarium* (hot water) and *frigidarium* (cold water), and an attached gymnasium, sports club, and massage parlor. Visitors would work up a sweat in the gymnasium, then visit each bath in turn, and afterward be cleaned and oiled by slaves. Many baths also featured snack or gift shops. Fees were an as or less per visit. The baths were segregated by sex.





*Acta Diurna* was a daily newspaper published by the government. It began during the consulship of Caesar and continued in the Empire. In simple and concise language it contained information on births, deaths, politics, the games, and curiosities, such as miracles, disasters, gossip, and scandals. The *Acta* was written by civil service clerks and reporters (*notarii*) and posted in public. Some scribes (*operarii*) made a living copying and distributing it to wealthy readers in Rome and the provinces.

## Meals

Romans ate three meals a day. The main meal was in the early evening. The poor sat on stools while the rich reclined on couches.

Grain prices were kept artificially low, and after 58 B.C. a ration of grain was distributed free. Grain was made into porridge, pasta, or bread. Cheap apartments lacked stoves for baking, so people ate cold porridge or ate at taverns. Watered wine or *posca* (sour vinegary wine) was the commoner's drink. Other cheap and available foods were leeks, beans, cabbage, fish, and sheep lips. Legionary pack rations consisted of hard biscuit or cake baked from military-issue flour, plus cheese, salt, and salted pork or other preserved meats. Potatoes, tomatoes, oranges, and bananas were totally unknown.

Equestrians and senators had more varied diets, and food was a high art among these classes. A typical dinner menu might include an appetizer of lettuce, leeks, and tuna garnished with eggs; a main course of fresh cabbage, sausage on a bed of grain, beans, and red bacon; for desert, raisins, imported Syrian pears, roast chestnuts, figs, olives, and hot chickpeas, all washed down with a good wine.

Many recipes included honey, fruit, and vinegar for a sweet and sour flavor—sweet and sour pork, rabbit with fruit sauce, liver sausage, chicken and honey, and anything having to do with snails or oysters were favorite dishes for those who could afford them. A pungent sauce called *garum* made from rotting fish entrails was also popular. Its manufacture was a major industry at coastal towns like Pompeii. Tons of it were shipped off to *garum*-less Romans serving in the distant provinces.

## Doctors and Mortality

Medicine was unsophisticated and often pure quackery—a typical salve for broken bones was a mixture of pig ashes, goat manure, and wine. Doc-

tors practiced by trial and error and made house calls accompanied by gaggles of students, all eager to poke and prod the patient. Martial's epigram shows the typical Roman skepticism toward physicians:

"Until recently, Diaulus was a doctor; now he is an undertaker. He is still doing, as an undertaker, what he used to as a doctor."

Roman doctors get a -5 (rather than -2) check penalty for Healing and Herbalism proficiencies. Also, no person should be able to heal back to more than 50% of lost hit points through use of these proficiencies.

*Lifespan and Mortality:* Because of disease and poor medical care, three out of four children died before adulthood. Even so, infanticide, especially of girls, was common for families who could not afford children; the baby was exposed (left outside to die).

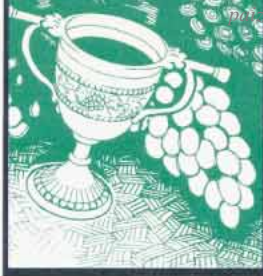
Even adult Romans had a short lifespan by modern standards. A man was lucky to live past 45. Most women died by 40, often in childbirth. This was balanced by earlier adulthood. A politician began holding office in his early 20s, and was expected to be old and wise enough to serve as a senator at 30 and be head of state (consul) at the age of 42. A girl married in her teens and might be a grandmother by 30.

Most Romans had simple funerals and were cremated or buried with a memorial inscription to mark their grave. Senators preferred elaborate public rites—a lengthy funeral procession through the city, with paid mourners and actors wearing masks of the deceased's ancestors. This was followed by a public eulogy and funeral games featuring gladiatorial combats.

## Justice and Crime

Rome teemed with lawyers and advocates, many of them would-be magistrates. Equestrians and senators were tried by a panel of equestrian jurors, while common plebeians and freedmen were given summary judgment from a single magistrate. Roman law favored senators and equestrians over common plebeians, while foreigners or women needed a Roman male citizen to represent them. Young men from senatorial families took unpaid jobs as advocates (lawyers), hoping to win reputations as brilliant legal orators before going into politics. Winning a Roman court case required finding an advocate. The case can be handled as competing Law proficiency checks, with modifiers based on





actual guilt or innocence, the evidence, and the social statuses of those involved.

Only slaves could be tortured to give evidence—it was not unknown for an accused man to free his slaves. Legal battles were popular spectator sports for all classes, especially when scandals or treason was involved. “Little treason” was the name for charges of corruption against a magistrate. These trials were usually major events and were often politically motivated.

Roman laws were written in such clear and concise fashion that many Western legal principles are still based on Roman concepts. Where Rome was deficient was in law enforcement. For instance, a victim of theft had no easy way to have the robber brought to justice. The Republic had no police. During the Empire, Rome gained a city watch/fire brigade (the *vigiles*) and a city guard (the urban cohorts), but they spent so much time keeping order, putting down riots, and putting out fires that they had little interest in investigating crimes. Rural crime was the responsibility of local legionary officers, but they usually had better things to do than help individuals.

When a common plebian or freedman needed justice, he normally went to his patron. A senator or rich equestrian could lean on the *vigiles*, urban cohorts, or a local legionary garrison to force them to try to catch a criminal, but it was just as common to hire a force of gladiators, clients, or private mercenaries to track down the accused and bring him to trial.

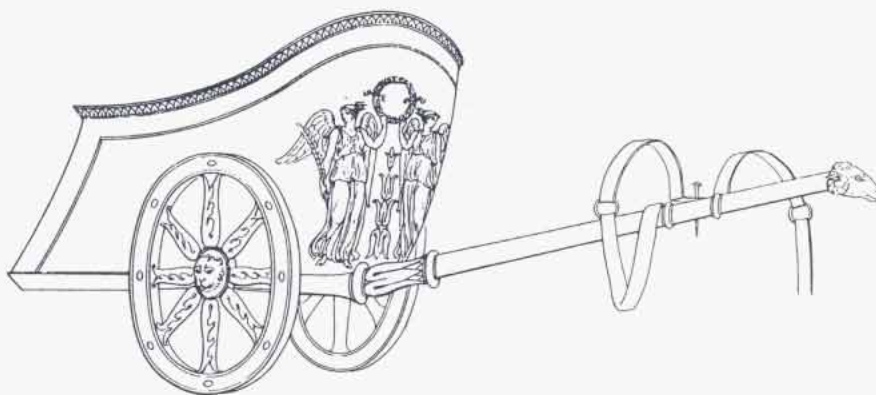
Piracy, banditry, murder, and nocturnal robbery were capital crimes, punishable by death through crucifixion or the arena, or by enslavement. Lesser crimes (including “little treason”) meant exile and

confiscation of property (which often went to leading senators or the emperor, or their supporters). For petty theft or assault, typical punishments were flogging or a fine of four times the value of the stolen goods.

In a case involving stolen goods or unpaid debts, even a favorable judgment did not mean the plaintiff would get back the goods or money. It would be up to him to either persuade the local watch or soldiers to help (unlikely without contacts or high status), do the job himself, or to hire his own agents. Gladiators and ex-legionaries can make a good living enforcing court decisions!

*Arms and the Law:* A law of interest to adventurers is the *lex julia de vi publici*. This law dates to the time of Julius Caesar. As a reaction to the street violence in the late Republic, it forbade civilians to carry weapons. It was often flouted by gladiators, who carried their wooden training swords (treat as short or broadsword, but half damage and blunt).

*Crime:* Roadside inns were headquarters of bands of highwaymen who kidnapped travelers, faked slave papers for them, and sold them to the chain-gangs of plantation owners. Pirates were also involved in enslaving or kidnapping citizens for ransom (this once happened to Julius Caesar). Rome often had to mount military operations to clear the seas. Greedy equestrian slumlords or loan-sharks often also owned gladiator schools and used their gladiators as debt-collectors and criminal enforcers. Some *collegia* and many taverns were fronts for organized crime. Besides the sin operations like gambling, criminals controlled door-to-door water delivery—a corrupt industry in which water was tapped illegally from city aqueducts and sold at a profit.





## Gazetteer of the Roman World

Romans do a lot of traveling—legionaries are posted abroad, merchants and their body guards search out new markets, and (just like modern politicians) Roman senators journey on “fact-finding” missions around the Mediterranean world.

This chapter provides descriptions of places for Roman PCs to visit.

### Traveling in the Roman World

Travel in the Roman world was swifter than any time before the invention of railways and steamboats. This was made possible by the Roman roads.

Built by and for the legions, roads radiated from the Forum at Rome to all parts of the Empire. They were paved with basalt slabs and laid on good foundations with drainage channels on both sides. The roads were very straight; tunnels cut through hills and bridges crossed rivers. Even so, weather conditions—especially mud and snow—could slow travel. At the best of times, a slow, horse-drawn cart could manage five miles/day, a walking man 25 miles/day, and an Imperial courier with several changes of horses could make 150 miles riding night and day.

### Inns and Taverns

Inns catered to poorer tourists, pilgrims, merchants, and couriers. An ordinary roadside inn had a colorful sign. Inside was a dimly lit common room thick with smoke and smelling of garlic. Three or four dingy rooms featured hard, bug-infested beds. Besides a bed, a customer could expect adequate food and drink, and maybe a musician or dancing girl for entertainment. Innkeeping was classed by Romans under “disgraceful trades.”

But not all inns were dreadful. Rome, resort towns like Pompeii, and large cities, such as Athens, would have a few places of higher quality. Normally run by Oriental immigrants, these inns were often large, converted upper-class mansions, and offered a common room with musical entertainment and good food, couches to recline upon while eating, a garden, and attractive slaves. Naturally, their prices were higher!

Since roadside inns were usually dirty and dangerous, a Roman of equestrian or senatorial rank tried to avoid them. Upper-class Romans instead stayed at the villas or houses of family friends (or friends of friends).

### Italia

Italia was the Roman name for the Italian peninsula. Italia was a patchwork of cities, towns, rural, villas and farming villages. Much of Italy was not Roman, but was made up of allied Latin-speaking towns and cities, some resentful of Rome’s rule. After the Social War (90-88 B.C.), in which the allies fought for Roman citizenship, the area gradually came under direct Roman control.

The north was more fertile and pleasant than the south, which had a reputation for being hot and unhealthy in the summer. Most towns were governed by a caste of rich councillors (decuriones) who passed power from father to son. The largest city was of course Rome. Other significant urban centers are the port city of Ostia, and the cities of Pisae, Terventum, and Brundisium. Pompeii was a famous resort until Mount Vesuvius erupted in A.D. 79.

Major roads run through Italia, the most important of which is the Via Appian (the Appian Way).

*Cisalpine Gaul:* The northern part of Italia was occupied by Celtic tribes. They were enemies of Rome during the early years of the Republic, sacking Rome in 390 B.C. By the third century B.C., the Romans had conquered the Italian Gauls, and the Gallic area became known as Gallia Cisalpina (“Gaul on this side of the Alps”). Due to their proximity, these Gauls were the first to adopt Roman ways—by the early Empire, many were Roman citizens.

*Sicily:* Captured in the First Punic War, its huge slave-worked farms were a major source of grain. The major city was the port of Syracuse, an important port.

### Alpine Provinces

The mountains were famous for cheese, wolves, bears, goats, forests, and brigands.

*Raetia:* A region that was inhabited by people of mixed Etruscan-Celtic descent conquered by Rome in the time of Augustus.

*Noricum:* Located west of Raetia, this area was populated by people of Celtic descent. During Caesar’s time, it was a powerful Celtic state and Roman ally. It was peacefully incorporated into the Empire in the time of Augustus.

### Hispania

This was Spain and Portugal. The natives were similar to Gauls, but more urban. Before the Punic Wars, there were several Greek and Carthaginian





colonies in Hispania. During the Second Punic War, Rome conquered Hispania and many Romans settled in Spain, but the natives were fierce fighters and the legions faced centuries of guerilla resistance. Hispania was pacified by the second century A.D. The exception was the mountainous Basque region (where the natives hold out to this day).

Hispania was divided into three provinces: Baetica, Lusitania, and Tarraconensis. Its main cities were Nova Carthago (New Carthage), Gades (modern Cadiz), Toletum (modern Toledo), Olisipo (modern Lisbon), Corduba, Malaca, Saguntum, and Valentia.

Hispania was known for its fine metalwork, its rivers rich in gold, and its wealthy mines, farms, and fisheries. The dancing girls of Gades were famed throughout the Empire.

## Illyria and the Balkans

This mountainous region was inhabited by warlike Indo-European tribes, many of whom had adopted Celtic culture. It consisted of the following distinct areas:

**Illyricum-Dalmatia:** This is now mostly present-day Austria. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D., it formed the Kingdom of Illyria, consisting of several powerful Illyrian tribes. They were notorious pirates, leading to many conflicts with Rome and final conquest in 168 B.C. Part of it became a Roman province, but uprisings and revolts continued until 6 A.D.

**Pannonia:** Located to the north of Illyricum, it was inhabited by the Pannonii, another Illyrian people. From 119 B.C. to 6 A.D., Rome fought many wars with them.

**Moesia:** Present-day Serbia was just east of Illyricum. It was subdued in 29 B.C. and was dominated by large legionary fortresses. The inhabitants were Romanized and the land was peaceful and productive.

**Dacia:** This area was on the plateau of Transylvania across the Danube river from Moesia. Its warlike semi-Celtic tribes threatened Macedonia, and it was the last Balkan state to fall to Rome. Caesar planned its conquest before he was slain. Dacia remained quietly independent until the Flavian period, when it attacked the Empire. It was conquered by Trajan's legions. Dacia was known for its silver and gold mines; its main import was wine.

## Greece and Macedonia

Romans saw Greece as the tired and decadent fountainhead of civilization. Rome conquered Greece

after the Third Punic War (2nd century A.D.), but Greece remained rebellious until the late Republic. Greek language, religion, philosophy, and culture permeated the entire Mediterranean world. Everything east of Greece (the "eastern" provinces of Rome) was more influenced by Greece than Rome and Greek, rather than Latin, was the common tongue.

Greeks were the only other people the Romans considered truly civilized—everyone else was a barbarian. Greeks agreed *they* were civilized but disagreed about the Romans. Much of Roman art, architecture, religion, and literature was inspired by or copied from the Greeks. Greeks were known as great educators, merchants, philosophers, doctors, and sailors. Greek slaves were often employed as tutors in Roman households, and in the Empire's civil service. Like Egypt, Greek cities were a tourist attraction. Besides the impressive architecture, pilgrims visited oracles, such as that at Delphi, and learned philosophy in Athens. The Olympic Games were still held in Roman times; only Greeks and Romans were eligible to compete.

**Achaea:** The Roman province of southern Greece, whose major cities were Corinth and Athens. Much of the countryside was divided into great estates of wealthy landlords.

**Epirus:** In northwestern Greece, this was a land of narrow mountain valleys, good pasture, and extensive woods. It was conquered by Rome in 167 B.C. A major Roman colony was found at Nicopolis. The area was also famous for witches.

**Macedonia:** This was a hilly country north of Greece with hardy rural inhabitants. Under Alexander the Great, Macedonia conquered first Greece and then the world, and the Macedonians didn't forget it. The area was known for bandits.

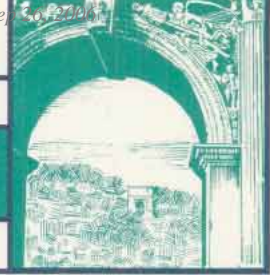
**Thracia:** East of Macedonia, Thracia was inhabited by a disorganized but warlike people living in small mountain farming villages. After Rome conquered Macedonia, Thracian border raids became common. Rome played different tribes off against each other, and by Caesar's day had transformed Thrace into a client kingdom and later a province.

**Crete:** This ancient island was a pirate haven second only to Cilicia. It was crushed by Roman invasion in 68 B.C. Archers from Crete were famous mercenaries and served with Rome's legions.

## Gallia

Gaul was modern France, Belgium, and parts of Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands. It bor-





dered Italy and had an early and close relationship with Rome. Gauls were a Celtic people who originally lived in villages guarded by hill forts; their priests were the druids. After Caesar's conquest, the Gauls became increasingly Romanized. Depending on the period and the part of Gaul he lived in, an individual Gaul might be a wild barbarian or a civilized Roman citizen.

The Gauls gradually came under Roman control, starting with those on the Italian side of the Alps. By 285 B.C., the Gauls they were no longer a threat to Rome—the reverse was true. From 125 to 121 B.C., Gaul's southern coast was conquered as Transalpine Gaul. Its major cities were the capital at Narbo and the large port-cities of Arles and Massalia (modern Marseilles). It exported grain and pottery to Rome. The rest of Gaul was known as Long-Haired Gaul, since its inhabitants did not adopt the Roman dress or fashions of their relatives on the coast.

From Transalpine Gaul, the Romans gradually extended their influence, primarily through military actions aimed at stopping the migration of Germans. In 58 B.C., Caesar was sent to pacify the Roman-controlled areas of Gaul. He soon converted his mandate as governor into a license to conquer all of Gaul. To confront Julius Caesar's invasion, Vercingetorix (chief of the Arveni) tried to assemble a diverse coalition of Gallic tribes. They never really pulled together, and Caesar rarely had to face a united front. A steadier alliance was that of the Belgae (centered near Belgium) who, Caesar wrote, were among the best fighters in Gaul.

After Caesar's conquest, the Gauls were gradually assimilated into Roman culture, starting with the major towns and trading posts and slowly working down to the villages.

*Narbonensis*: This was the old province of Transalpine Gaul, with Massilia as its major city.

*Lugdunensis*: Northern and central Gaul with Lugdunum (modern Lyons) as the capital, it was also the gateway to Britain. It was known as a metal-working area.

*Aquitania*: It bordered Hispania (Spain) and consisted of most of southwestern Gaul. It was famous for its wine. The major center was Burdigala (modern Bordeaux).

*Belgica*: This area, bordering modern Belgium, was eastern Gaul. It was mostly forested and remained dangerously "barbarian" even under Roman occupation.

*Germania Superior and Germania Inferior*: Parts of modern Switzerland and most of modern Belgium

were the small portions of Germania under Roman control, with the frontier at the Rhine River. Like Belgica, they remained dangerous to visit and were not Romanized.

## Egypt

Civilization in Egypt predated Greece and Rome by thousands of years. When it met Rome, Egypt's ruling dynasty was the Greek-influenced Ptolemaic kings. Rome allied with Egypt during the Republican period. After the Civil Wars, Antony made Egypt his power base and married its queen Cleopatra. Their defeat by Octavian marked the end of the Egyptian royal house. Augustus made Egypt the personal fief of the Roman Emperor.

The major city was the cosmopolitan port of Alexandria, with a population of three quarters of a million. It was a center of philosophy and scholarship, and it contained the Great Library, the largest repository of books and documents in the world. Other famous cities were Memphis and Thebes, both known for their picturesque monuments and wondrous buildings. The Pyramids were a favorite destination for Roman tourists.

Egypt was controlled by a Greco-Roman bureaucracy whose main interest was collecting taxes; the average rural Egyptian thought of the emperor as an absentee pharaoh and life went on as it had for thousands of years. Egypt's major exports were grain from the fertile Nile regions, papyrus, marble, and luxury goods, such as perfume. Since the inhabitants were used to heavy taxation and hard rule, they gave the Romans little trouble.

## Africa

This was modern North Africa—the Romans never penetrated deep into the interior. The natives were dark-skinned nomadic Berber tribesmen in the interior, but Carthaginians, Phoenicians, and Greeks lived in the thriving coastal cities. The most important city was Carthage until it was destroyed by Rome in the Punic Wars of the 2nd Century B.C. The area across from Sicily became Rome's Africa Province, a relatively small region surrounded by the African-Berber kingdom of Numidia.

Africa Province was menaced by the Numidian king Jugurtha during the late Republic—the long desert war the Romans fought to capture him led to the reformation of the Roman army and the rise to fame of the politician-generals Marius and Sulla.





Afterward, many Roman traders and settlers (including Marius's veterans) put down roots in Africa Province. Much of North Africa had good farmland, rather than the desert it is today.

Under the Empire, Africa Province was expanded to the provinces of Mauritania (modern Algeria), Numidia, and Cyrenaica (Libya). The coast was speckled with Italian towns and vast slave-run farms owned by the wealthy. The native Berbers were pushed back into the interior. They continued sporadic guerilla raids and revolts until the end of the Empire, but one legion was sufficient to handle them.

Africa's cities were Carthage (rebuilt in Imperial times to become the second largest city on the Mediterranean), the mountain fortress-city of Cirta in Numidia, and Tripoli in Cyrenaica. Thanks to Roman irrigation, its agricultural wealth was proverbial. Its important exports were ivory, grain, olives, marble, precious stone, dyes, wood, and exotic animals exported for the games. Cyrenaica was known for horses and medicinal plants. The African interior was believed to be haunted by strange tribes and terrible monsters!

## Asia Minor

*Asia Province:* This very wealthy region was bequeathed to Rome in 133 B.C. by an heirless king. It was a land of glittering Greco-Roman cities and oppressed Anatolian peasants who worshiped Cybele. The area was very wealthy, producing the best dyed cloth in the Empire. During the Republic, both rich and poor were ruthlessly exploited by Roman tax-farmers and governors, leading to a bloody uprising against Rome in 84-88 B.C. Under the Empire, the tax burden was lightened on the rich, and its Greco-Roman cities became both loyal and prosperous.

*Bithynia et Pontus:* A fertile land of wooded mountains and valleys, the kingdoms of Bithynia and Pontus were known for their iron, shipbuilding, and marble. The citizens lived in villages with a Persian-Iranian feudal nobility and large temple estates containing sacred slaves ruled by Persian priests. The major cities were included Amaseia, Chalecedon, and Neocaesarea.

During the Republic, Pontus was an eastern rival of Rome. It aided Rome against Carthage, but then turned against Rome under the brilliant but unstable tyrant Mithridates VI (120-63 B.C.). His forces occupied most of Asia Minor. Mithridates encouraged the

oppressed citizens of Asia Province to massacre 80,000 Roman tax-farmers and merchants in a single day, then he fomented revolt in Greece. He attempted to emulate Alexander the Great and conquer the world. In a series of wars, he fought off Sulla but was eventually defeated by Rome in 67 B.C. Pontus was merged with neighboring Bithynia as a Roman client state and province.

*Cappadocia:* This rough and mountainous region was similar to Pontus. Its mountain pastures bred fine race horses. It was an independent kingdom (but dominated by Pontus or Rome) until it became a province in 17 A.D. It was often menaced by Parthian invasion.

*Cilicia, Lycia, and Pamphylia:* The south and west was wild and mountainous with excellent ship-building timber. Many coastal villages, especially in Cilicia, were notorious as pirate havens. The eastern plains were among the best farmland in Asia and were heavily settled by Greeks.

*Galatia:* A territory similar to Cappadocia, inhabited by migrant Celtic tribesmen rather than Orientals. They allied with Rome against Pontus and remained loyal, becoming a province in 25 B.C. and a bulwark against Parthia.

*Armenia:* A mountainous land first fought over by Rome and Pontus, and later by Rome and Parthia, its native princelings struggled to retain power. Its capital was Artaxata.

## The Middle East

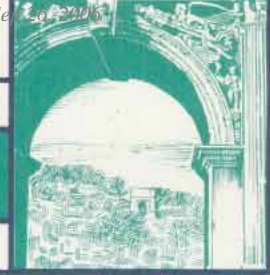
During the late Republican period, Ptolemy conquered most of this region for Rome.

*Syria:* The coast was dominated by wealthy and populous Phoenician-influenced port cities, such as Antioch, Damascus, and Tyre, in which Greek was the normal language. Farther inland were Aramaic-speaking Jews, Arabs, and Syrians. The potent Mithraic cult originated in Syria. The area was rich in vineyards and olive groves.

*Palestine:* The kingdom of Judaea became a client state of Rome during the 1st century B.C., but Roman repression led to a series of religious revolts that were brutally crushed by the legions. The major city was Jerusalem. Christianity originated here.

*Arabia:* A desert land inhabited by nomads who controlled a rich caravan trade route leading across to the Far East.





## Britannia

Britannia (England and Wales) was briefly visited by Caesar, but the first serious invasion took place in 43 A.D. The southern and eastern parts of Britannia are lowlands. The major tribe of Britons was the Catuvellauni. They traded with the Gauls (minerals were a major export).

The lowlands (most of what is now England) were the first to fall under Roman domination. The capital of Roman Britain was in Colchester, but the largest city was Londonium (modern London). The northern and western parts were hillier, and their inhabitants were more resistant to Roman conquest. A strong class distinction (and some dislike) developed between the common Celtic-speaker of the rural villages and the Latinized town-dweller.

The warm mineral springs at Bath and Buxton were once sacred to the Celtic inhabitants. As the name suggests, they became favorite spas of the bath-loving Romans. Britannia was always heavily garrisoned, both to deal with native revolts in the 1st century A.D. and to stop Pictish invasions later.

**Wales:** This region was known for its gold mines at Dolau Cothi. The Romans garrisoned Wales with a chain of forts but didn't conquer the interior—the Welsh could always retreat to mountainous fastnesses. The major tribes were the Silures in the south and the Ordovices in the north.

**Caledonia:** Scotland was occupied by the wild Picts, a Latin word that means "painted people" after the woad (blue dyed) war-paint they wore. The dark Picts were fiercer and more primitive than the Celtic Britons and were never conquered by the Romans. Once Britannia was conquered, Rome had to defend its new subjects against raids. During the middle Empire, Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall were built and garrisoned by the legions to stop the Picts.

**Hibernia:** Ireland was never conquered by the Romans, and it remained a mysterious land to them. Toward the very end of the Empire, Christian missionaries began to visit Hibernia.

## Germania

This was a forested land that bordered on Gaul. Romans considered the Germans to be more savage than the Gauls—in the time of the early Republic, the Germans were near-mythological bugbears. In actual fact, they weren't much different than the Gauls. What frightened the Romans were the German migrations during the 1st century A.D.

During that time, entire German tribes were on the move through Gaul into Italy, leading to conflicts with Rome. The Roman legions stopped the German migrations, but attempts to conquer Germania failed. The Rhine and Danube Rivers became the Empire's northern border.

During the 1st century A.D., the most powerful tribes were the Chatti and the Cherusci. Constant border raids kept the legions busy. Beginning in 238 B.C., the Goths (from Scandinavia and northern Germany) migrated into the Ukraine area and menaced Rome's Balkan provinces. Other Germans were hired as mercenary guardians of the Empire; they eventually conquered Rome.

## Asia

When the Roman ally King Attalus III of Perganum died, his will left his kingdom to Rome. This gave Rome much of what is now Turkey, plus numerous islands in the Adriatic, including Lesbos, Lemnos, Samos, and Chios. During the Republic, the capital was Perganum; other major cities were Smyrna, Ephesus, and Halicarnassus.

The urban inhabitants were descended from Greek colonists, and their cities were major commercial centers. Rome considered Asia Province its milch cow, and *publicani* tax-farmers were sent to milk it for all they could get. The Asian cities resented this.

## The Kingdoms of Parthia

The Parthian empire occupied much of what is now Iran, parts of Armenia, and the ancient kingdom of Mesopotamia. It controlled the rich Far East trade routes. Its ruling class was Oriental with a thin Greek veneer.

From the 1st century B.C. until the 2nd century A.D., Parthia and Rome squabbled over borders and client states adjacent to Rome's Asia Province. The Parthian horse-archers were capable of destroying any Roman army that ventured into the desert; only the best Roman generals could halt them. In A.D. 224, the Parthian dynasty fell into internal chaos, but its successor, Sassanid Persia, remained a deadly enemy of Rome.

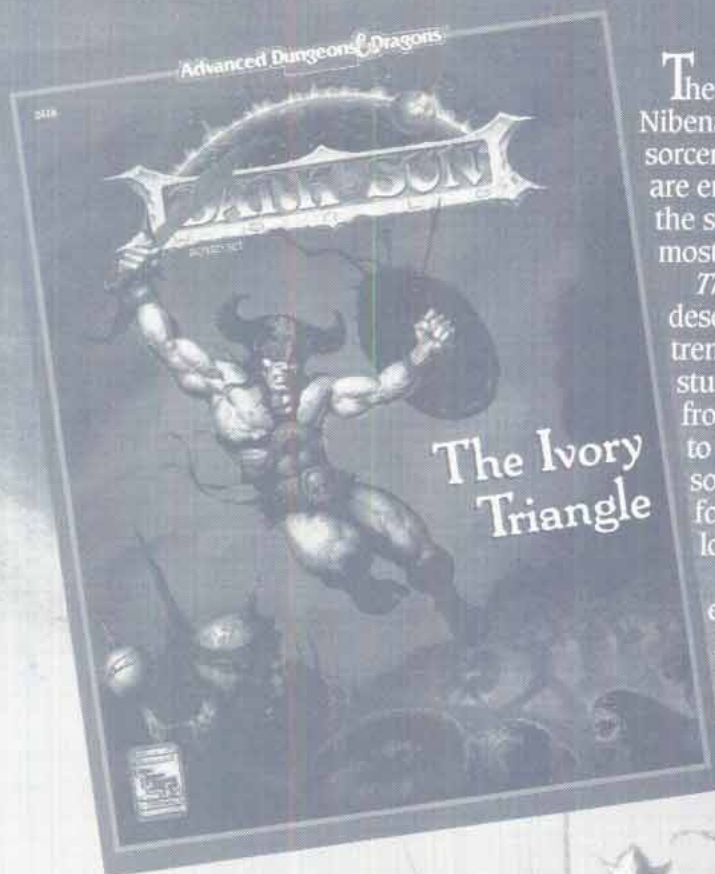
## Scythia

This was a mysterious northern kingdom inhabited by pastoral nomads who worshiped a Great Goddess. Its people (like the Parthians) were known as horseman, archers, and metalworkersj51





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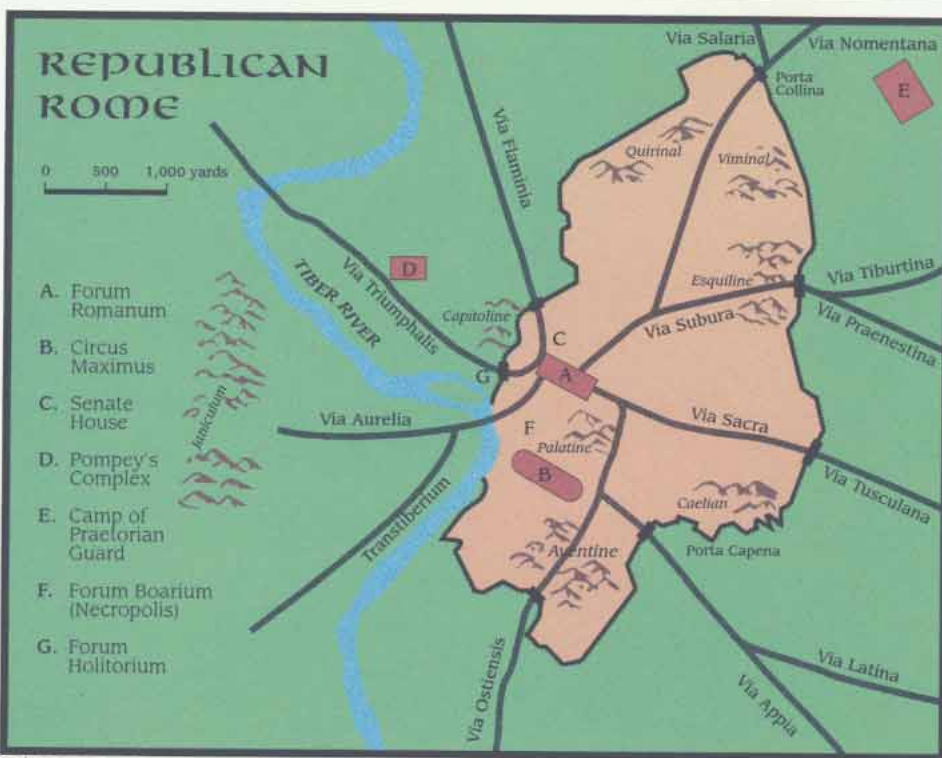
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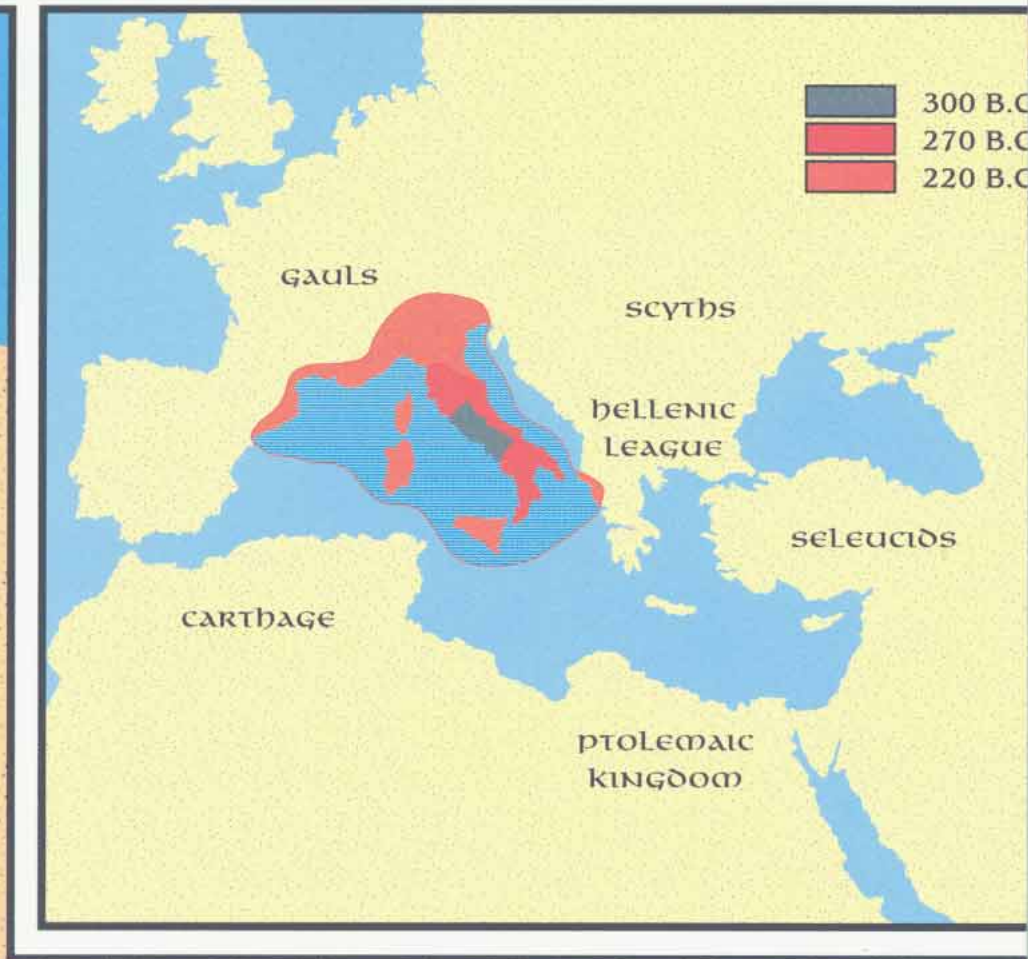
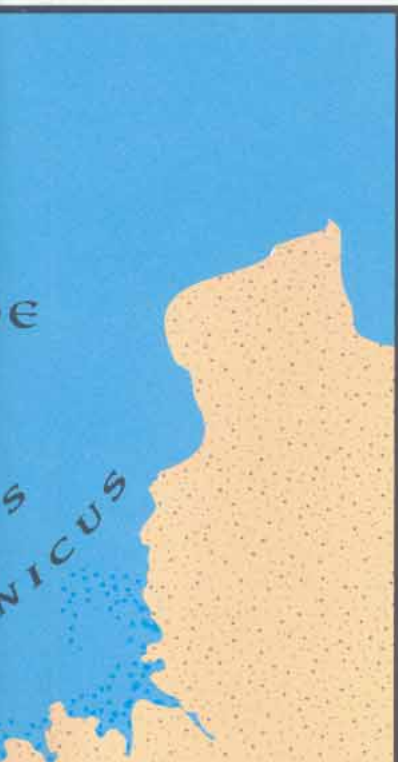




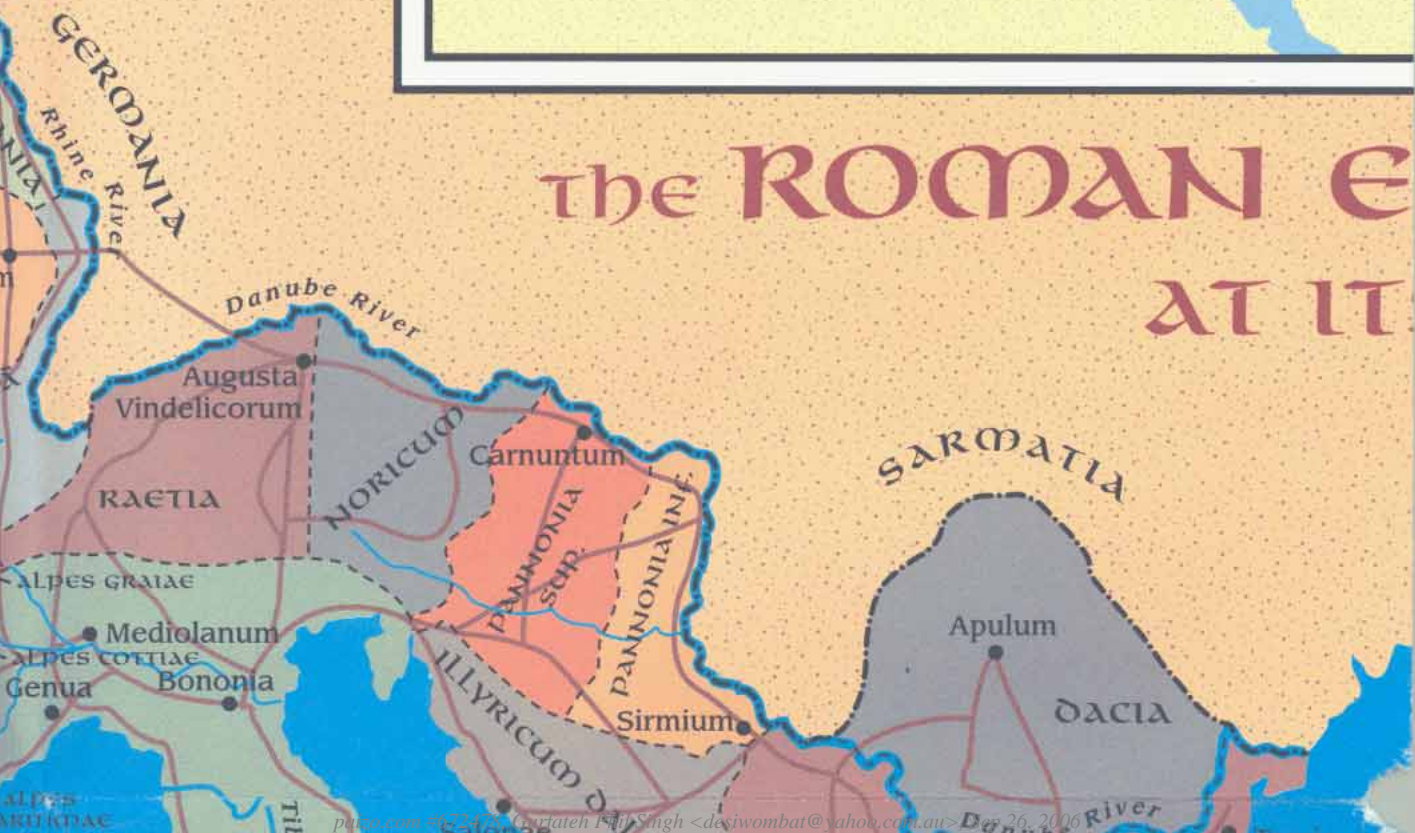








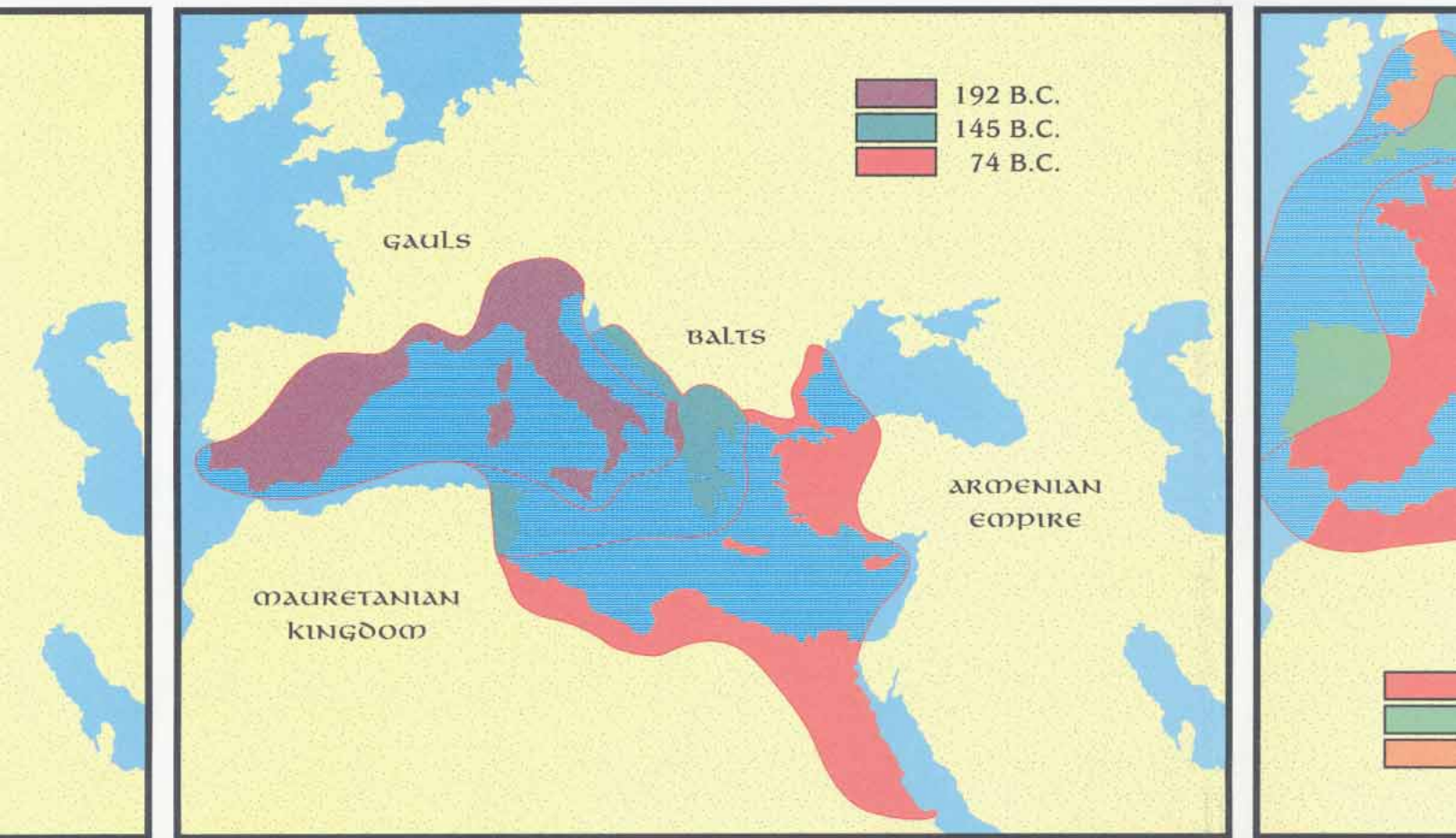
# THE ROMAN EMPIRE AT ITS PEAK











# EMPIRE s height CA. A.D. 117



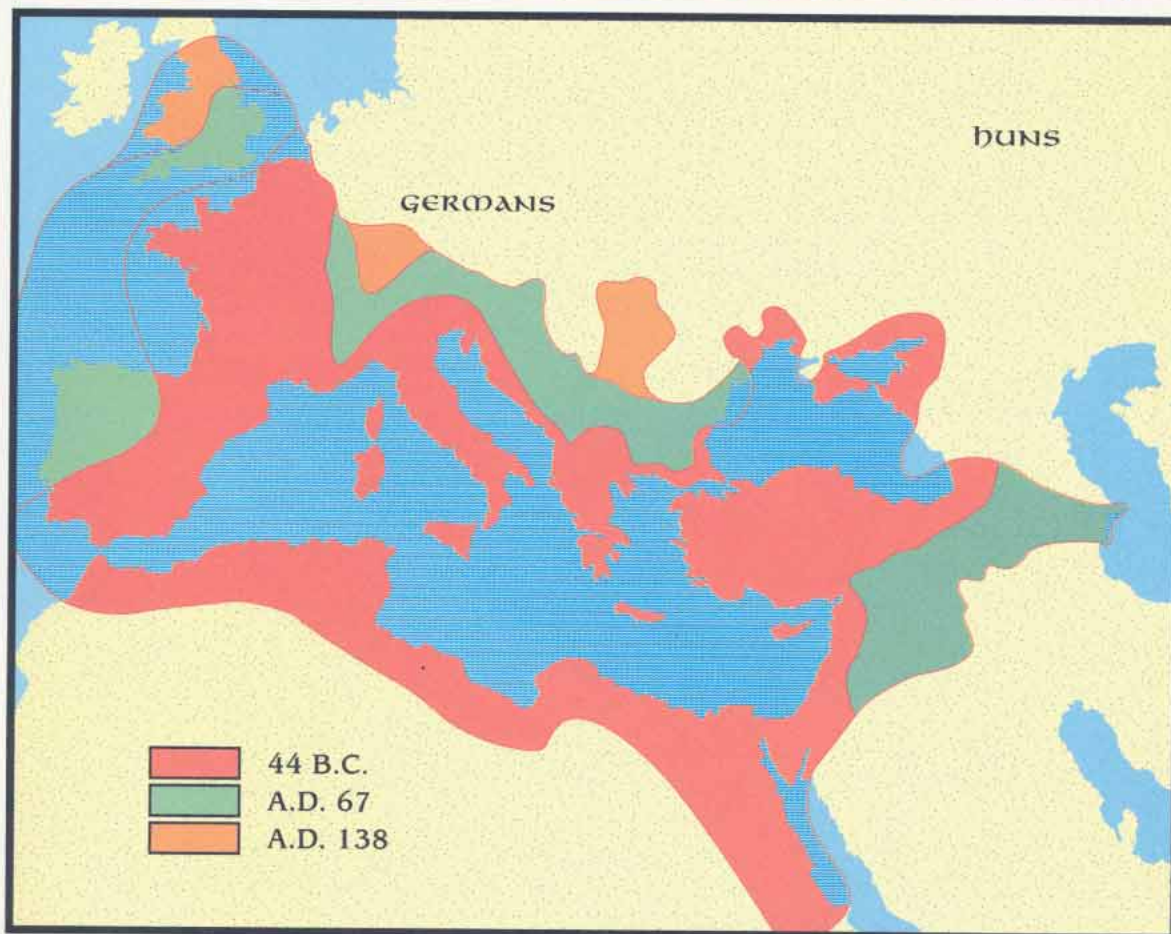






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